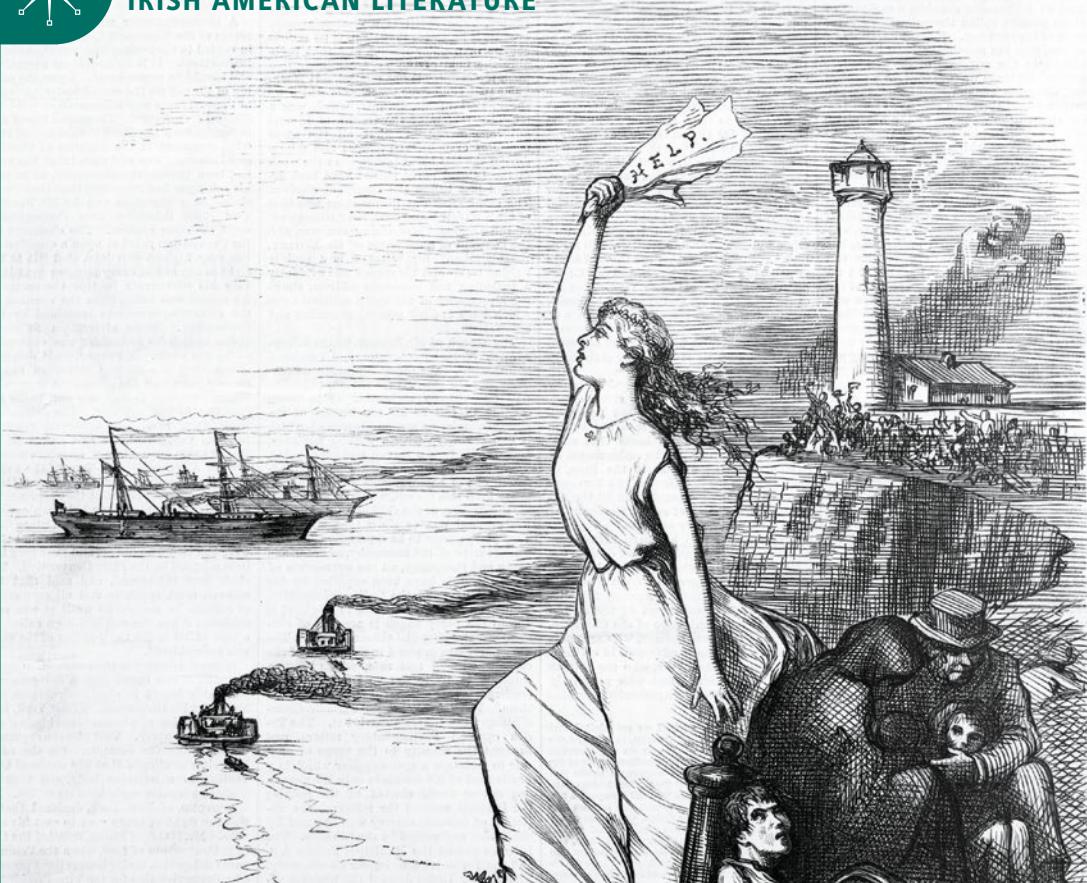




NEW DIRECTIONS IN IRISH AND
IRISH AMERICAN LITERATURE



The Famine Diaspora and Irish American Women's Writing

Edited by Marguérite Corporaal
Jason King · Peter D. O'Neill

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New Directions in Irish and Irish American Literature

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Editors

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Marguérite Corporaal, Jason King, and Peter D. O'Neill

“Erin’s Daughter” (1849), a poem by Lydia Huntley Sigourney, describes a young Irishwoman who has emigrated across the Atlantic. Despite “drear heart-sickness” for her childhood home, she works hard to “lift the load / Of poverty severe” from “her parents,” by sending most of her income to her family in Ireland: “To them with liberal hand she sent/Her all—her hard-earn’d store.”¹ However, due to the outbreak of the Great Famine (1845–49), the remittances are no longer sufficient: “Gaunt famine o’er her home had strode, / And all were with the dead!”² Sigourney’s poem bears testimony to two events of the time: the wide-scale starvation that had afflicted Ireland for 4 years in a row following the failure of the potato crop in 1845 and increasing mortality in subsequent years, especially amongst highly vulnerable Irish agricultural labourers and cottiers. They were most exposed to hunger and eviction because of Ireland’s colonial system of landholding and completely inadequate relief, which resulted in over a million deaths, as well as the massive emigration of Irish men and women to North America. As seminal studies by, amongst others, Kevin Kenny and Kerby Miller have shown, more than 2 million among those

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seeking refuge from hunger settled in the United States.³ During 1847, approximately 117,000 Irish emigrants sailed to the United States with a mortality rate of 10 percent; 100,000 of the most destitute took the cheaper passage to British North America, and up to a fifth of them perished at sea or in fever sheds soon after their arrival.⁴ Black '47 marked the deadliest year of the transatlantic crossing and defined its cultural memory, often configured in terms of female abjection and suffering.⁵

The Famine Diaspora and Irish American Women's Writing breaks new ground by taking a longer, generational view of "Erin's Daughters" who became authors and whose output was shaped both directly and obliquely by the memory of the Great Hunger and Irish Famine migration as they built literary careers in North America. These Irish-American and Irish-Canadian women writers grappled with and reworked a wide panoply of themes associated with the Great Hunger and its exodus: such as the role of landlords in failing to alleviate hunger and evicting their tenants in moments of crisis; the enduring memory of proselytization and religious conversion in exchange for food; the spread of the Devotional Revolution both before and especially after the Famine which consolidated institutional Catholic religious piety, increasingly conservative social mores, and evermore visible ecclesiastical architecture; the significance of ruins as colonial emblems; the racialization of Irish emigrants in the United States and their struggles against African-Americans to stake a claim to "whiteness"; and changing patterns of women's migration and roles between Ireland and North America that could be emancipatory and exploitative at the same time. Their recollections of calamity informed their perceptions of society on both sides of the Atlantic, as the contributors to this volume consider in rich detail.

Historians generally agree that, in contrast to earlier patterns of Irish emigration, the gender breakdown of Famine immigrants was relatively equal.⁶ Nonetheless, the visibility of Irish immigrant women of the Famine generation in research was slow to emerge. Remarkably, the character of the young, single Irish woman who moved to America during the Famine in order to find employment as a domestic servant and relieve her family was very popular in fiction written by Irish-American authors. For instance, Mary Anne Sadlier's *Bessy Conway; or, the Irish Girl in America* (1862), Peter McCorry's *The Lost: Or, Our Irish Girls: Their Trials, Temptations, and Triumph* (1870), and John McElgun's *Annie Reilly; Or the Fortunes of an Irish Girl in New York* (1873) are novels featuring exemplary young Irish women who remain true to their Catholic faith and Irish modesty

despite the pressure put upon them by their Protestant employers to convert. As Eileen Sullivan has therefore argued, Catholic literature not only depicted Irish emigrant women as the epitome of Catholic virtue but also demonstrated that they often enjoyed a lot of autonomy and agency in the New World, as domestic laborers.⁷

Their relative independence in America was not addressed until the late 1970s by scholars such as Hasia Diner, Carol Groneman, Janet Nolan, and, more recently, Susan Ingalls Lewis, Tyler Anbinder, and Margaret Lynch-Brennan. Groneman, Diner, and Lynch-Brennan investigate Irish women's work as domestic servants: the realities of their jobs as well as the ways in which they were represented in the American media.⁸ Groneman estimates that 25 percent of the Irish women younger than 30 worked as domestic servants and one-third in the needle trades. She concludes that married Irish women continued to do needlework from home, as a way to supplement the family's income: "women may have chosen this particular occupation because it allowed them to continue to function in their role as housewife and mother while also contributing to the family's support."⁹ Lewis's work sheds further light on Irish immigrant women from the Famine generation who even owned needle businesses, as "self-employed craftswomen."¹⁰ What is more, as Tyler Anbinder reveals in his research on the New York Emigrant Saving Bank, these women were not just professionally active but would often have savings accounts of their own.¹¹

It is interesting that they often ventured on their own on the American job market, having to secure an income for themselves as single women or widows, but often also as the means to support family in the homeland. As such, they really broke away from gender ideologies of both their home and host societies. In Catholic Ireland, home was seen as "the abiding place of women. The natural centre and seat of all her occupations," as Patrick J. Keenan wrote in 1856.¹² Women's impact on society had to be derived from their roles as wives and mothers, as, for instance, "Employment for Women," published in *The Dublin Review* of 1862–1863, stated. By instilling in their families a sense of moral principles, women, at the same time, guarantee the moral well-being of the public sphere in which their husbands and children participate: "[t]he very soul and secret of a nation's strength is its sound morality."¹³ In the mid-nineteenth century United States, Margaret Walsh observes, the Protestant bourgeois ideal was also that women "should not be gainfully employed, but should only fulfill domestic duties of running a good household, and being a good wife and mother or a dutiful daughter or sister."¹⁴

What is even more fascinating, and has so far been overlooked, is that quite a few women belonging to the Famine generation of immigrants manifested themselves as writers as a way to actively contribute to ongoing public debates in the ancestral homeland as well as in their host society, on topics such as women's social position, working-class conditions in the United States, the Irish Land Question, the Catholic church, and home rule for Ireland. Furthermore, these Irish-American woman authors engaged with and helped develop literary genres of the age, as well as gave expression to the memories of the Great Famine and experiences of dislocation and reintegration in the Famine generation's adopted country. Their texts look back to the past, especially the harrowing years of hunger of many Irish emigrants, but also reframe these legacies of the Famine into American contexts, bearing witness to the fact that "migrants carry their heritage, memories and traumas with them," which subsequently "are transferred and brought into new social constellations and political contexts."¹⁵ Their writings at the same time are oriented towards the present and future, and they are often explicitly transnational in that they stage a dialogue between Irish and American history, and "interactions and cross-currents" of thought that transcend national borders.¹⁶

A FORGOTTEN GENERATION OF WOMEN WRITERS

The emergence of the feminist movement in the later decades of the previous century has helped highlight a number of nineteenth-century woman authors marginalized or overlooked previously by a male-dominated academy. As a result, in the United States, writers such as Lydia Maria Child, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Susan Warner, producers of popular, didactic, sentimentalist fiction—the genre that dominated the United States literary market for most of the nineteenth century—have become more widely studied. Such sentimentalist fiction embodied not just a set of formal literary markers, but like all genres, engaged readers in a distinctly ideological way.¹⁷ These novels endeavored to capture what Raymond Williams has called "the structure of feeling" of their era,¹⁸ that is, they aimed to shape the way that people thought about themselves, and the society in which they lived.

Interestingly, Irish-American women writers of the Famine generation worked in the same genres as their North American-born woman contemporaries. Famine Irish American writers like Mary Anne Sadlier, who had migrated to Montreal in 1844 and later moved to New York with her

publisher husband James Sadlier, co-opted the popular genre of sentimental fiction for their own purposes. Nonetheless, Sadlier's works of fiction and those of fellow Irish-American immigrants such as Peter McCorry, Dillon O'Brien, Father Hugh Quigley, and Alice Nolan, were long ignored within Americanist scholarship. One reason for this dismissal was their explicit endorsement of Catholic doctrine and the fact that they urged their immigrant readers to "keep their faith on alien soil," and resist the threat of cultural assimilation.¹⁹ For example, Sadlier's *Bessy Conway* (1862), which relates an immigrant Irish girl's experiences in New York, shows that neglect of Catholic worship in the New World leads to downfall. The heroine's cousin, Ned Finigan, establishes a pub in New York, described as "a bad way of makin' a living" from the perspective of his staunch Catholic fellow immigrant Paul Branigan.²⁰ Subsequently, he neglects his faith and dies an alcoholic.

Besides having been neglected by American studies scholars for their unquestioning support of the militantly patriarchal Catholic Church, the novels of the Famine generation also suffered from their perceived insularity in terms of the target readership. As Charles Fanning observes, "as Famine immigrants," these authors mainly wrote didactic fiction "for their own kind [...] traumatized refugees," an "audience desperately in need of guidance" in their host communities.²¹ What is more, these authors' choice of publishing outlets for their works also contributed to their marginalization within the academy. Irish-born Catholic authors from the Famine diaspora were published almost exclusively in Irish-American magazines and newspapers, such as *The American Celt*, *The Irish American*, or the *Boston Pilot*, as well as by an array of book publishers that had sprung up to meet the needs of the Catholic Church and its burgeoning parochial school system. Publishing houses such as D. and J. Sadlier & Co., of New York, Boston, and Montreal, and Patrick Donahue, of Boston, realized that there was a lucrative and growing market for Catholic-oriented works of fiction.²² These authors' identification with Catholic, often even ethnically specific publishers, meant that they were generally overlooked by literary historians.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, feminist scholars from the 1960s onwards also ignored Irish North American Catholic women writers like Sadlier. This is not simply because Sadlier and her colleagues wrote specifically for Catholic Irish American Famine emigrants but because of the sometimes decidedly anti-feminist views contained in their writings.²³ As Catherine Eagan reveals in her discussion of *Old and New* (1868) in this volume,

writers like Sadlier would often idealize Catholic feminine domesticity, at the expense of representations of Protestant woman characters engaged in the improvement of women's position. Instances of explicit conservatism on gender issues in such fiction by woman authors of the Famine generation may have disqualified them for inclusion in feminist recuperation projects in academia. However, as Marguérite Corporaal demonstrates in her chapter in this volume, a closer look at the fiction written by women from the Famine diaspora reveals unexpected subversive ideas about the agency of the female sex: authors such as Sadlier, Anna Dorsey, and Alice Nolan depict young women and mother figures who resist the patriarchal authority of fathers, landlords, and representatives of governmental power, even if they do not significantly overstep the boundaries of femininity.

Therefore, while these novelists might seem at first glance to reinforce traditional gender representations, the ways in which they negotiate issues of identity, power, and womanhood are far more complex than may be envisaged. Additionally, there are many woman authors among the Irish Famine diaspora, such as Fanny Parnell and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, whose works—ranging from pamphlets to poetry—are outspokenly political and signify impactful interventions in public debates of their era. Hence, it is timely that these underexplored writings by Irish-American women receive further critical attention. *The Famine Diaspora and Irish American Women's Writing* aims to provide an overview of the variety of ways in which these Irish woman authors responded to political, social, and religious issues in Ireland and North America, how they gave shape to Famine memory from within American and Canadian contexts, and their representations of their own diasporic community.

The volume covers eleven North-American woman authors who wrote for or were descended from the Irish Famine generation: Anna Dorsey, Christine Faber, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Mother Jones, Kate Kennedy, Margaret Dixon McDougall, Mary Meaney, Alice Nolan, Fanny Parnell, Mary Anne Sadlier, and Elizabeth Hely Walshe. Scholarly essays on these women's works are accompanied by annotated excerpts from the texts that are discussed. The volume can thus be viewed both as a collection of cutting-edge research and an anthology of writings which together shed new light on the sociopolitical position of the Irish in North America, their connections with the homeland, women's activities in transnational (often Catholic) publishing networks, and women writers' mediation of Ireland's cultural heritage.

Recent developments in Irish studies in particular make research on this group of women writers most topical. The growing critical interest in Irish-American, diaspora, migration, and transnational studies,²⁴ the current attention to global legacies of Ireland's Great Famine and the transmission of famine memory; emerging research on Irish popular and print culture,²⁵ and the ongoing recovery of Irish women's writing in the shaping of gender, class, and racial identities²⁶ will be greatly enriched by this study of the nineteenth-century woman Irish authors within the Famine diaspora, the literary networks they formed, and the issues with which they engaged. *The Famine Diaspora and Irish American Women's Writing* brings together prominent scholars from Europe and North America who examine Irish-American women's works along these lines in the first comprehensive edited collection about their literary careers and influences.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE IRISH-AMERICAN WOMAN AUTHORS

The Famine Diaspora and Irish American Women's Writing aims to enrich our understanding of Irish diasporic communities, their interaction with the ancestral homeland and United States society, as well as the pivotal role played by women writers in the construction of Irish North-American identities and the dissemination of Famine memories. For one thing, the essays and extracts will demonstrate that writings by the Irish-American Famine generation go well beyond the narrow ideological scope that they have often been identified with. Indeed, Irish-American cultural production did not simply promote the Catholic Church but also US state interests. Famine generation novels overwhelmingly advocated strict adherence to hierarchical disciplinary structures, not only within the Church but the family, and society, at large. Writings by women of the Famine diaspora attempted to inculcate in their readers what, in a bow to Max Weber, has been identified as a Catholic work ethic within the spirit of American capitalism.²⁷ For example, Paul Branigan in Sadlier's *Bessy Conway* not only thrives in New York because he forms a little group for Irish immigrants' children to train them in Catholic doctrine but also because he is self-reliant, works hard and, as a result, sets up a "nice little business."²⁸ In Anna Dorsey's *Nora Brady's Vow* (1869), discussed in this volume by Corporaal, the eponymous heroine's hard work and respect for her employers gets rewarded: she obtains a gift which enables her to purchase

“a small house” for her growing family, “furnished neatly and substantially [...] where she lived in happiness and comfort.”²⁹ Together with her husband, fellow emigrant Thomas McGinnis, she prospers because the latter has secured a partnership in a good-running “warehouse”; the result of an eagerness to work hard, to respect seniors, and to remain a faithful Catholic.³⁰

Famine Irish American Catholic writers promoted unwavering fealty to the US State. As Sadlier succinctly puts it, when referring to the role of the Catholic parochial school system in *The Blakes and the Flanagans* (1855): “Many and many a valued citizen did it bring up for the State.”³¹ Furthermore, with the publication of Sadlier’s *Bessy Conway* in 1862, at the beginning of the American Civil War when issues of race and citizenship were being hotly contested, Irish Catholic American writers began staking a claim for Irish Catholics within respectable *white* society at the expense of African Americans and other non-whites. An example of this can also be found in the aforementioned *Nora Brady’s Vow*, which contrasts Nora’s respectful demeanor towards her employer Mrs. Sydney with that of African-American fellow servant Phillis, who has been rescued from bondage in the South. While Phillis is tickled in her vanity by the abolitionist ideal of racial equality, Nora tells the girl “not to interfere with her,” making Phillis aware of “how widely they differed.”³² Today this passage will raise eyebrows; nonetheless, it enhances our understanding of processes of identity formation during the Reconstruction era. All of the above factors point to the crucial role in United States nation-building played by woman authors of the Irish American Famine diaspora. Their role has, until recently, been either ignored or undervalued.³³ The texts examined in this volume give access to this underexplored dimension.

Women writers of the Famine generation did not exclusively engage with their own communities and the challenges they faced, however. *The Famine Diaspora and Irish American Women’s Writing* illustrates the generic variety of their literary works which comprise political treatises, novels, short stories, and poetry. This volume bears witness to these woman authors’ profound engagement with political and social issues, such as the conditions of the poor and woman’s vote. The period in which they wrote involved a combustible combination of social phenomena in the United States: unprecedented growth in terms of territory and population; widespread industrialization and capitalist development spurred by rapid technological innovation; the concomitant emergence of the cult of domesticity; the devastating Civil War; and an evolving and

ever-incendiary racial state dynamic. Sentimentalist fiction, for the most part, reflected the anxious preoccupations of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASP), their imaginations roiled by the flood of Irish Catholic immigrants, among other non-Protestant Europeans arriving daily at American seaports.³⁴ By responding to all these developments in their host country, these Irish women writers provided testimonies of social transformations in American society.

Most importantly, these responses were far from uniform. In fact, a further aim of this volume is to counter any tendency to homogenize Irish Famine diasporic women's writing because of the aforementioned intended readership. As this volume demonstrates, these women represent a much wider political spectrum and class background than is acknowledged and commonly thought. Social conservatives such as Sadlier wrote disparagingly about the women's suffrage movement exploding all around her, while passionately promoting notions of American individualism, albeit one tempered by the corporate designs of the Roman Catholic Church. Meaney wrote from a similar Catholic perspective. However, other writers, such as the union organizer, Jones, socialist activist, Gurley Flynn, and Land League agitator, Parnell embodied the struggle for women's rights through a rejection of patriarchal and hierarchical authority and an embrace of a collectivist approach to political action. Also, unlike the other women in this study, both Jones and Flynn hailed from working-class backgrounds. Furthermore, around half of the women discussed in this volume—Hely Walshe, Dorsey, Dixon McDougall, and Parnell—were Protestant-born. Taken together, then, these women writers of different class and religious backgrounds—Catholic, Protestant, and atheist, conservative, socialist, and liberal—represent an array of political opinion, activism, and general background that resists the urge to judge them by the same standards.

OUTLINE OF THE VOLUME

The Famine Diaspora and Irish American Women's Writing is divided into two parts. Part I, titled "Groundbreaking Irish Women Writers of North America," opens with "From Regional Remembrance to Transatlantic Heritage: the Transportability of Famine Memory in Fiction by Mary Anne Sadlier, Anna Dorsey and Alice Nolan," in which Marguérite Corporaal demonstrates how each of the three writers employ *lieux de mémoire* of Famine Ireland as literary devices that help shape Irish

North-American identity formation, and that play a significant role in their Irish characters' development of transatlantic identities.³⁵ Sites of recollection—ruins in particular—function as screens of memory on which Famine trauma is projected: they symbolize the suffering of the Famine-stricken rural and Catholic locals, and more specifically the extinction of the regional population and its culture by wide-scale starvation, disease, and the mass exodus following Famine calamities. Additionally, the memory sites in Ireland play a central role in the development of the characters' Irish transatlantic identities, while the narratives also suggest the transportability of such memory sites to the new territories of settlement. Old ruins feature as both memory sites and metaphors in the following two novels considered in this chapter. In the case of Irish-American writer Alice Nolan's *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, church ruins and cottage ruins are employed in an effort to ensure that incidents of religious persecution and tenant evictions in Ireland are not forgotten in America. Castle ruins, seen as the last remnants of the old Gaelic order, feature prominently in *Nora Brady's Vow*, originally published in instalments in this Boston-based *The Pilot* in 1857. Its author, Anna Dorsey, a convert to Catholicism, did not have Irish ancestry but became one of the pioneer of Catholic literature in the United States.

An author who would address the Famine past explicitly in various writings was the aforementioned Mary Anne Sadlier, the most prolific writer of nineteenth-century Famine Irish literature. She features in all the chapters in Part I, a mark of her importance to the genre. Her novel *New Lights* is set during the Great Famine, using the catastrophe as a frame for foregrounding the ills of proselytism. The final part of *Bessy Conway* also takes place when blight has affected the potato crops in Ireland and Bessy's parents and siblings are under threat of eviction as well as starvation; a situation remedied by the returned immigrant girl who pays off the bailiffs and purchases food: "And to be sure that was the supper that was well relished. No royal family in Europe was as happy that night as Denis Conway's, for their cup of bliss was made sweeter than nectar by the recollection of sorrow and misery past." Moreover, her famished sister Ellen's "pinched, parched look" has disappeared as by magic, "and the ghastly paleness of the sweet features was tinted with a more lifelike hue."³⁶

Despite these fictional recollections, Sadlier struggled for decades to align her actual eyewitness impressions of the Irish Famine migration with her literary design. Her evocations of the Famine past in *New Lights* and *Bessy Conway* were based on received memories and secondhand accounts

rather than her own perceptions of emigrant suffering which she bore witness to in Montreal in 1847. Jason King's chapter delves further into Sadlier's Canadian experiences in this regard. Titled "'Six Thousand Half Forgotten Victims': Mary Anne Sadlier, Contested Famine Memory, and French-Canadians," his essay provides a salutary reminder that the most destitute Famine Irish emigrants crossed the Atlantic in 1847 to British North America (Canada) rather than the United States, where North America's largest mass graves can be found, especially in Montreal. King notes that Sadlier herself migrated a year before the Great Hunger to Sainte-Marthe and then Montreal in "Catholic Canada"³⁷ or Quebec, where she lived until 1860 before moving to New York and then returning to Montreal as a widow in the 1880s. She regarded French-Canadians as devout co-religionists akin to the Famine Irish in their steadfast rejection of Protestant encroachments and proselytization efforts.

The Protestant Irish author Elizabeth Hely Walshe similarly if conversely envisioned French-Canadians as Irish Catholic surrogates, whose "supineness" made them susceptible to religious conversion.³⁸ Yet, for all of her emphasis on French-Canadian and Irish Catholic religious fortitude, Sadlier never alluded for decades to the Famine Irish influx to Montreal that she had witnessed in 1847, when approximately six thousand emigrants perished in the city's fever sheds. King contends that Sadlier's remembrances of the Famine dead were inhibited by the installation of the Black Rock memorial over their mass grave by the city's Protestant hierarchy in 1859. He further suggests that the monument became an object of contested cultural memory in the decades that followed, and that it was not until its reclamation by the city's Irish Catholic community as a site of pilgrimage and communal procession that Sadlier began to draw upon her own recollections of the Famine migration in service of a more useable past.

Mary Anne Sadlier and Mary Meaney are the subject of Catherine Eagan's chapter, "Sentimentally Irish, Racially White: The Balancing Act of Irish-American Identity in the novels of Sadlier and Meaney." She focuses on the balancing act carried out by the earliest Irish-American writers of the Famine generation in their efforts to carve out an identity that blends essential Catholic Irishness with cultural assimilation. Eagan pairs Sadlier's *Old and New* (1868) with *The Confessors of Connaught* (1865), by the lesser-known Mary Meaney, to offer an original analysis of the racial formation of Irish-American identity through the use of the slavery metaphor in these women's writings. As their male counterparts did, Irish-American women authors in this period used common tropes of

whiteness—Europeanness, civilization, Christianity, and freedom—to emphasize the whiteness of their characters, but they foreground their characters' genteel deportment, allying those characters and the Irish-American community with white middle-class expectations for behavior, in a way that male authors did not. Instead of making cross-racial gestures towards solidarity with the oppressed African-Americans, as did the most popular male novelists, Paul Peppergrass and Hugh Quigley, these women exhibited a quiet confidence in the racial superiority of the Irish to African Americans.

Part II, “Irish American Women’s Activism (1880–1920),” explores a group of women activists and their writings, that have until now been ignored or marginalized, not only in relation to the Famine diaspora, but also in Irish and North American history in general. In particular, the part examines a number of Irish and Irish-American women writers known for their activism in relation to class, gender, and ethnicity. An essay by eminent Famine historian Christine Kinealy leads off the section. Titled “Fanny Parnell: The Songstress of the Land League,” the chapter sheds light on a woman with strong transatlantic connections, and a remarkable gift for political organization. Founders of the Ladies’ Land League in 1880, Fanny Parnell and her sister Anna took over the running of the transatlantic organization when the male leaders of the League were imprisoned. In addition to being a political activist, Fanny was a published writer, mostly of poetry. Her best-known poem, “Hold the Harvest,” was written in 1880 as the west of Ireland was experiencing the most serious subsistence crisis since the Great Famine. Kinealy’s chapter examines Fanny Parnell as an author whose experience of famine in Ireland (both historical and actual) informed her writings and her politics, while her gender, her social position, and her transatlantic origins gave her a unique perspective to understand post-Famine Ireland and Irish America.

The next two chapters in Part II concern three pioneers of American radical politics. Rosemary Feurer’s “Mary Harris ‘Mother’ Jones and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn: Radical Women of the Irish Diaspora” uncovers in these two shining lights of American labor and revolutionary politics not only strong traces of the Famine’s aftermath but a groundbreaking transnational political outlook that inspired the likes of Irish republicans and trade unionists, James Connolly and Jim Larkin. These two radical women were part of a constellation of Irish-American woman labor activists who thought of themselves as global contesters of empire and articulators of an alternative language of “civilization,” an understanding they

developed from a long memory and from the transatlantic dialogue. Jones' and Flynn's perspectives are also notable in that they constituted a rejection of the racial sensibilities that dominated post-Famine Irish immigrant diaspora identities in North America. Jones started out in the racially charged Irish-led labor movement in San Francisco, which made Irish exclusion its leitmotif. But by the early twentieth century, she was the leading advocate for the rejection of whiteness and helped to formulate a "new unionism" movement that made inclusiveness its hallmark. Unlike the socially conservative Meaney and Sadlier, Flynn and Jones remolded their Catholicism to suit their anti-racist, socialist politics.

In the annals of Irish America, Kate Kennedy should rank alongside Jones and Gurley Flynn as one of the most prominent and effective political organizers of the nineteenth century. Yet, today she is largely consigned to obscurity. Born in 1827 into a prosperous County Meath farming family, Kennedy received an auspicious education at Navan's Sisters of Loretto Convent, which had been founded in 1833, shortly after the Catholic Emancipation Act. However, tragedy enveloped her life early on. Her father died when she was thirteen, and a few years later the Great Famine decimated the Kennedy farm. Joining the mass exodus of Famine refugees, Kennedy, along with a brother and sister, crossed the Atlantic in 1849. Rejecting her Catholicism altogether because of what she experienced during the Famine, Kate Kennedy became one the most effective advocates of women's rights in Californian history. Peter O'Neill's "Kate Kennedy, Irish Famine Refugee, American Feminist," brings deserved attention to this largely unknown figure.

The final chapter concerns a woman whose politics, though less radical than the others considered above, nevertheless deserves to be included in this part because of advocacy on behalf of the Irish underclass. In 1882, Belfast-born Irish-Canadian Margaret Dixon McDougall traveled from Canada to Ireland as a special reporter for the *Montreal and New York Witness*. She addressed current social ills at great length in her letters, which would later be published as the collection *The Letters of 'Norah'*. In 1883 McDougall recast her observations and experiences in novelistic form, as *The Days of a Life*, a fictional account of a long visit to Ireland by Canadian girl Ida Livingstone during the Land War era. While the author would not go so far as to voice support for a Repeal of the Union or independence for Ireland in her novel, McDougall was very critical of the current condition of the Irish poor, landlord-tenant relationships, and the supposed benefits of agrarian improvements and laws made until then.

Lindsay Janssen's "Margaret Dixon McDougall's *The Days of a Life* (1883); an Irish-Canadian Perspective of the Repetitive Nature of Irish History," shows not only how the author illustrates the repetitiveness of Irish history but also how she used Famine memories to provide a narrative structure with which to frame contemporary suffering in Ireland.

Conditions in Ireland present and past resurface frequently in all the works considered in Part II, including the harrowing Famine years. Sometimes these woman authors' allusions to the Great Famine are made in passing, or, as Rosemary Feurer shows, author Mother Jones mentions her family's poverty in Ireland, but does not explicitly address hunger. There were, however, Irish-American and Irish-Canadian women writers who did give shape to the lived memories of the Great Hunger, of themselves or their fellow immigrants, thereby showing that received notions that it was followed by a long period of silence about the event³⁹ require thorough reassessment.

Parts I and II together offer critical analyses, contexts, and texts that will significantly broaden existing paradigms about the Irish-North American diaspora and its dynamics with other United States and Canadian communities. It will illuminate the constellations of transnational Famine memory as well as its interactions with cultures of remembrance on both sides of the Atlantic. Most importantly, *The Famine Diaspora and Irish American Women's Writing* will force us to rethink the degree of agency and societal impact that could be attained by immigrant women during a period when they faced ethnic and gender bias. These women writers did not only cross national borders literally, and symbolically, in their writings; they also extended the boundaries of public debates, diasporic identities, and Famine memories.

NOTES

1. Mrs. L.H. Sigourney 1849, "Erin's Daughter," in *Illustrated Poems* (Philadelphia: Carey & Hart), 175.
2. Sigourney, "Erin's Daughter," 176.
3. Kerby Miller 2008, *Ireland and Irish America: Culture, Class, and Transatlantic Migration* (Dublin: Field Day); Kevin Kenny 2000, *The American Irish: A History* (London: Longman). For further reading see Marguérite Corporaal and Jason King 2017 (eds) *Irish Migration and Memory: Global Recollections of Ireland's Great Hunger and Exodus in Interdisciplinary Perspective* (London: Routledge).

4. See Jason King 2019, *Irish Famine Migration Narratives: Eye-Witness Testimonies* vol II, in Christine Kinealy, Jason King, Gerard Moran (eds) *The History of the Irish Famine* (4 vols. Routledge), 2.
5. Marguérite Corporaal 2017, *Relocated Memories of the Great Famine in Irish and Diaspora Fiction, 1846–70* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press), chapter 2.
6. See Mary C. Kelly 2013, *Ireland's Great Famine in Irish-American History: Enshrining a Fateful Memory* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield), 18; Deirdre Mageean 1997, “Irish Women’s Perspective” in Christiane Harzig (ed.) *Peasant Maids, City Women: From the European Countryside to Urban America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 97.
7. Eileen P. Sullivan 2016, *The Shamrock and the Cross: Irish-American Novelists Shape American Catholicism* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press), 189.
8. See Carol Groneman 1978, “Working-class Immigrant Women in Mid-Nineteenth-Century New York: The Irish Woman’s Experience,” *Journal of Urban History*, 4, no. 3: 255–73; Hasia Diner 1983, *Erin’s Daughters in America: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press); Janet Nolan 1989, *Ourselves Alone: Women’s Emigration from Ireland, 1885–1920* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky); Margaret Lynch-Brennan 2014, *The Irish Bridget: Irish Immigrant Women in Domestic Service in America 1840–1930* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press).
9. Groneman, “Working-class Immigrant Women in Mid-Nineteenth-Century New York,” 262.
10. Susan Ingalls Lewis 2005, “Business or Labor? Blurred Boundaries in the Careers of Self-Employed Needlewomen in Mid-Century Albany” in Beth Harris (ed.) *Famine and Fashion: Needlewomen in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge), 143.
11. Tyler Anbinder 2012, “Moving Beyond ‘Rags to Riches’: New York’s Irish Famine Immigrants and Their Surprising Savings Accounts,” *The Journal of American History*, 99, no. 3: 741–70. See also online, accessed 18 Jul. 2022, <http://beyondragstoriches.org/home-exhibit>
12. Patrick J. Keenan 1856, *Appendix to Twenty-Second Report of Commissioners of National Education in Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 97.
13. Anon. 1862–1863, “The Employment of Women,” *Dublin Review* 52: 17.
14. Margaret Walsh 2010, “Visible Women in the Needle Trades: Revisiting the Clothing Industry in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries” in Janet Floyd et al. (eds) *Becoming Visible: Women’s Presence in Late Nineteenth-Century America* (Amsterdam: Rodopi), 66.

15. Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad 2010, “Introduction,” in Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad (eds) *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 2.
16. Ann Rigney and Chiara de Cesari 2004, “Introduction” in *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales* (Berlin: De Gruyter), 7, 4.
17. See, for example, Jane Tompkins 1985, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790–1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
18. Raymond Williams 1961, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus), 63.
19. Charles Fanning 1990, *The Irish Voice in America; 250 Years of Irish-American Fiction* (Lexington, KT: University Press of Kentucky), 76.
20. Mrs. J. Sadlier 1862, *Bessy Conway; or, the Irish Girl in America* (New York: D. and J. Sadlier & Co.), 65.
21. Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 75.
22. Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 94, 114–15. See also Cian T. McMahon, 2015, *The Global Dimensions of Irish Identity: Race, Nation, and the Popular Press, 1840–1880* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press), 82–83.
23. For more on this, see Peter D. O’Neill 2017, *Famine Irish and the American Racial State* (New York: Routledge), chapter 3.
24. See, for instance, Cian T. McMahon 2021, *The Coffin Ship* (New York: New York University Press); Kelly, *Ireland’s Great Famine in Irish-American History*; Lindsay Janssen 2018, “Diasporic Identifications: Exile, Nostalgia and the Famine Past in Irish and Irish North-American Popular Fiction, 1871–91,” *Irish Studies Review*, 26, no. 2: 199–216.
25. Recent studies include Corporaal, *Relocated Memories of the Great Famine in Irish and Diaspora Fiction, 1846–70*; Christine Kinealy, Patrick Fitzgerald, Gerard Moran (eds) *Irish Hunger & Emigration: Myth, Memory and Memorialization* (Hamden, Connecticut: Quinnipiac University Press); and Marguérite Corporaal, Christopher Cusack, Lindsay Janssen, and Ruud van den Beuken (eds) *Global Legacies of the Great Irish Famine: Transnational and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Oxford: Peter Lang).
26. See, amongst others, McMahon *The Global Dimensions of Irish Identity*; Christopher Cusack 2020, “Sunk in the Mainstream: Irish Women Writers, Canonicity, and Famine Memory 1892–1917,” in Kathryn Laing and Sinéad Mooney (eds) *Irish Women Writers at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: Alternative Histories, New Narratives* (Brighton: EER), 37–48.
27. O’Neill, *Famine Irish and the American Racial State*, 103.
28. Sadlier, *Bessy Conway*, 312.
29. Anna Dorsey 1869, *Nora Brady’s Vow and Mona, the Vestal* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co.), 158.
30. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 159.

31. Mrs. J. Sadlier 1855, *The Blakes and the Flanagans: A Tale Illustrative of Irish Life* (New York: D. and J. Sadlier & Co.), 15.
32. Dorsey, *Nora Brady's Vow*, 96.
33. For more on this see, Peter D. O'Neill 2020, “US Nation Building and the Irish-American Novel, 1830–1880,” in Matthew Campbell (ed.) *Irish Literature in Transition, 1830–1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 179–96.
34. See, for example, Noel Ignatiev 1996, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge); and Matthew Jacobson 2002, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish, and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press).
35. For the concept see Pierre Nora 1989, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations* 26: 7–25.
36. Sadlier, *Bessy Conway*, 278.
37. Mrs. J. Sadlier 1861, *Elinor Preston; or, Scenes at Home and Abroad* (New York: D. and J. Sadlier & Co.), 171.
38. Elizabeth Hely Walshe 1863–64, *Cedar Creek: From the Shanty to the Settlement. A Tale of Canadian Life* (London: The Religious Tract Society), 39.
39. Kevin Whelan states that “Ireland was culturally traumatised in the immediate post-Famine period”, which in his view was manifested in a cultural silence on the Great Famine. See Kevin Whelan 2004, “Reading the Ruins: The Presence of Absence in the Irish Landscape,” in Howard B. Clarke, Jacinta Prunty, Mark Hennessy (eds) *Surveying Ireland’s Past: Multidisciplinary Essays in Honour of Annigret Simms* (Dublin: Geography Publications), 149. Emily Mark-FitzGerald, Joseph Lennon and Joseph Valente have recently warned against a too uncritical espousal of trauma theory and its vocabulary of silence and repression in research on the Great Famine and its memories, for this blinds our vision to the often very explicit ways in which memories of the Great Irish Famine were addressed and strategically utilized in politics, historiography and art, both in the past and present. See Emily Mark-FitzGerald 2013, *The Great Irish Famine: Visual and Material Culture* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press), chapter 1; Joseph Lennon 2014, “The Starvation of a Man: Terence MacSwiney and Famine Memory”, in Oona Frawley (ed.) *Memory Ireland, Volume 3: The Famine and the Troubles* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press), 65; and Joseph Valente 2014 “Ethnostalgia: Irish Hunger and Traumatic Memory”, in Oona Frawley (ed.) *Memory Ireland, Volume 3: The Famine and the Troubles* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press), 174–78.

PART I

Groundbreaking Irish Women Writers of North America



CHAPTER 2

From Regional Remembrance to Transatlantic Heritage: The Transportability of Famine Memory in Fiction by Mary Anne Sadlier, Anna Dorsey, and Alice Nolan

Marguérite Corporaal

Elinor Preston (1861), a novel by Irish North-American writer Mary Anne Sadlier (1820–1903), includes a scene in which the eponymous heroine encounters the orphaned Margaret Gilmartin, a young woman who, like Elinor, takes the emigrant ship from Ireland to Boston. Margaret recounts the dire fate of her family during the Great Famine: when Margaret's father had departed to America in order to financially support his family back in Ireland, Norah Gilmartin and her daughter were “reduced to beggary and starvation” when “the dismal year of the famine came on.” Forced to “go into the poorhouse in order to escape starvation,” Norah

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Gilmartin perishes with disease.¹ The passage clearly remembers the wide-scale outbreak of typhus, dysentery, and cholera in the overcrowded work-houses which caused high mortality rates in famine-stricken Ireland.²

Moreover, this scene demonstrates the inherent transportability of Famine memory. Recent scholarship in memory studies has directed its concerns to the fluidity of cultural memory, arguing for a transcultural examination of processes of remembrance. Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad have proposed a transnational approach in examining memory dynamics, as “migrants carry their heritage, memories and traumas with them,” which “are transferred and brought into new social constellations and political contexts.”³ In a similar fashion, Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson have sought to define the notion of transcultural memory as “the travelling of memory *within* and *between* national, ethnic and religious collectives.”⁴ Margaret Gilmartin’s journey to the New World implies that the Famine memories are travelling along with her to her new host society, across boundaries of time and space. At the same time, Sadlier’s novel transmits memories of Ireland’s harrowing Famine years to readers in Canada and the United States, including audiences without Irish roots themselves.

Mary Anne Sadlier was one among a generation of women writers from Canada and America who contributed to the creation of the Great Famine legacies across the Atlantic. Others include Irish-American writer Alice Nolan and Anna Dorsey, who did not have Irish roots, but, after her conversion to Catholicism in 1840, became one of the pioneer authors of Catholic literature in the United States, and contributed regularly to the Irish-American periodical *The Pilot*.⁵ This chapter, which towards the end includes excerpts from Sadlier’s *New Lights; or Life in Galway* (1853), Nolan’s *The Byrnes of Glengoulah* (1868), and Dorsey’s *Nora Brady’s Vow* (1869), will explore the ways in which these woman authors, who contributed extensively to the literary landscape of the Irish Famine diaspora, gave shape to these homeland memories of starvation and loss in their fiction. As will be demonstrated, Catholicism plays a significant role in these women writers’ mediation of the Famine past. Sadlier’s *New Lights* and Nolan’s *The Byrnes of Glengoulah* directly connect famine suffering to religious oppression. Furthermore, in remembering the recent Great Famine, Sadlier’s and Nolan’s novels negotiate and moderately challenge existing gender roles: these narratives figure young women from the Ascendancy class who openly defy class policies, present alternative models of landownership, and even convert to Catholicism themselves.

Additionally, Dorsey's *Nora Brady's Vow* and these novels by Sadlier and Nolan consciously construct the Famine as a transferable legacy that is significant for the identity formation of Irish North-American communities. Sites of recollection—ruins in particular—function as screens of memory on which Famine trauma is projected: they symbolize the suffering of the Famine-stricken rural and Catholic locals, and more specifically the extinction of the regional population and its culture by wide-scale starvation, disease, and the mass exodus following upon the Famine calamities. The *lieux de mémoire* in Ireland additionally play a central role in the development of the characters' Irish transatlantic identities,⁶ while the narratives also suggest the transportability of such memory sites to the new territories of settlement.

FAMINE VICTIMS AS CATHOLIC MARTYRS

Mary Anne Sadlier is a name that will not ring a bell with many readers today, nor even with most experts on Irish and Irish diasporic literature and culture. While she can be counted among the forgotten writers of bestsellers, hers was a well-known name in her own time: read by audiences in Ireland, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and even Germany, and she received the Laetare medal of literature from Notre Dame University in 1895.⁷ Furthermore, she was central to the Catholic, nationalist Irish diaspora in both Canada and the United States, as an author, publisher, and through her important social network; her family home was also a hub of Catholic intellectuals, including New York Archbishop John Hughes and editor Orestes Brownson.⁸

Born in Cootehill, Co. Cavan, on New Year's Eve 1820 as Mary Anne Madden, Sadlier found herself destitute and without any other family after her father's death in 1844.⁹ Emigrating to Montreal in 1844—a year before the Famine—she partially supported herself by writing for the Canadian journal *The Literary Garland*, but also by publishing in ethnically oriented magazines such as the *New York Freeman's Journal*, McGee's New York-based *American Celt*, and the *Boston Pilot*, the Catholic periodical with the widest readership. Shortly after arriving in Montreal, Sadlier must have met her future husband James Sadlier, junior partner and Montreal branch manager of the New York publishing house D. & J. Sadlier & Co., which specifically targeted Irish, French and German middle- and working-class immigrants.¹⁰

Mary Anne Sadlier would play a significant role in running the business after her husband's death. However, above all, she became a prolific writer for this publishing company and its magazine, the *New York Tablet*, which was viewed as one of the fortresses in America of Irish faith and identity. Sadlier wrote advice books for her fellow Catholic immigrants on how to preserve their faith in the New World.¹¹ and, as Charles Fanning has noted, propagated the “unshakeable identification of Ireland with Catholicism” in her writings.¹²

This identification of “Irishness” with Catholicism features prominently in Sadlier’s historical fiction, which sought to map out the histories and cultural memories of Ireland’s Catholic population. Historical novels such as *The Fate of Father Sheeby; a Tale of Tipperary Eighty Years Ago* (1863), *The Hermit of the Rock: A Tale of Cashel* (1863), and *The Confederate Chieftains: A Tale of the Irish Rebellion of 1641* (1864) focus on the steadfast belief of the native Irish population in the face of English religious oppression, thereby, as Sadlier wrote in her preface to *The Confederate Chieftains*, aiming to “infuse life” into the “skeleton” of Ireland’s history which “has never yet been fairly represented on the page of history.”¹³ Seeking to pay her debt to “our departed worthie” and “[t]heir efforts to redeem the land of their love” in “fidelity to her ancient faith,” Sadlier unearthed forgotten histories, in which she equated Catholic belief with Irish nationalism.¹⁴ Her writings fulfilled an important role in a Protestant North-American climate where their faith could be under threat. As Archbishop John Hughes of New York stressed, it was vital that Irish immigrants continued to attend mass and go to confession, as this would guarantee “some permanent anchorage to Divine faith.”¹⁵

Sadlier’s novels, which were set in her own time, also represent Catholicism as both martyrdom and legitimate resistance to England and its Ascendancy’s colonial regime. The best example is her Famine narrative *New Lights; or Life in Galway* (1853). The novel shows that the hardships faced by the famishing Catholic population are aggravated by the pressures placed upon them both by the local landlord Ousely and the Evangelicals that he supports, to forswear their faith and embrace Protestantism. During the Famine, so-called proselytizers gained notoriety by offering food to the starving population on condition of registered conversion,¹⁶ and *New Lights* depicts these “Sopers” who take advantage of the Catholics’ despair and plight. Katty Boyce, for example, who is offered soup by the so-called Protestant charity is severely pressured to register as a Protestant if she and her children are not to starve by “Mr

Fanagan, that gives out the soup,”¹⁷ to the outrage of Phil Maguire, who condemns the way in which these Evangelicals are “prowlin’ about like wild beasts, watchin’ for their chance to pounce on poor little innocent children, and miserable starvin’ creatures, an’ draggin’ them away to their den.”¹⁸

Facing the threats of starvation and lack of clemency towards their arrears in rent payment if they do not barter their creed, Ousely’s tenants nonetheless prefer death and eviction over conversion. This steadfastness of religious beliefs becomes evident when Bernard O’Daly refuses to embrace the Protestant Church so his family may not starve. Rather, he wishes to have an empty stomach and taste “the true bread of life” of Irish Catholicism, as he tells the Evangelical who comes to his door.¹⁹ Referring back to his forefathers who were similarly willing to die for their faith, Bernard states: “Tell them that the O’Dalys are of the ould stock [...] an’ they can die for their faith, as they have lived in it, them an’ their fathers before them.”²⁰ Phil Maguire voices a similar necessity for heroic religious martyrdom in the face of the methods used by the Soupers when he witnesses how orphan children who are lured by the Evangelicals to go to their school in exchange for soup: “better for you, a thousand times, poor sorrowful things, that you were lyin’ under the turf with them that own’d you, than to be robbed of the religion that would bring you to heaven.”²¹ Dying of hunger is thus envisaged as a form of Catholic resistance.

While Sadlier’s novel is set during the recent Great Famine, the issue of British religious imperialism and religious persecution of Catholics in Ireland would have resonated with Irish immigrant communities at the time. Catholic immigrants of the Famine generation faced virulent hostility from the expanding Nativist or Know Nothing movement in America—a political organization which accused the predominantly Catholic immigrants of encroaching upon the fundamental rights and principles of the American-born population, who were in their view “tampered with in our religion [...] injured in our labor [...] assailed in our freedom of speech.”²² Catholic Irish-Americans, however, often felt discriminated against because of their religious convictions and became victims of violence and looting, as John Francis Maguire’s 1868 account of the destruction of the Irish Catholic parish church in Manchester, New Hampshire, by a mob of Know-Nothings reveals: “They had succeeded in destroying its windows of stained glass, when a party of Irish Catholics gallantly encountered and dispersed the mob, and saved from further injury the church which had cost them so much sacrifice.”²³ The Boston-based *Pilot* would often

express its disgust at the agenda of the Know-Nothing movement; for instance in “Know-Nothing Brawls,” published on 19 August 1856, which ridicules the Nativists’ consideration of “naturalized citizens as foreign.”²⁴ *The Pilot* would also often reprint articles about Britain’s religious imperialism from Dublin-based newspapers, such as D.W.C.’s “England and her Conquest,” published on 20 December 1857, which vehemently critiques England for inflicting her religion “in vengeance. [...] Her faith is not a law of benevolence: it is a penalty of persecution, and her preaching is not made in winning humility, but in proud domination.”²⁵

Cultural memories of the penal laws and religious persecution of the Irish by the English were kept alive in Catholic print media, and this may also account for the recurrence of the theme of proselytism in Irish-American fiction which recollects the Great Famine. For example, a similar plotline which identifies famine suffering with religious oppression and represents hunger as a test of faith for Catholics can be found in Alice Nolan’s *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*. *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, dedicated by its author to “the faithful people of Ireland and their descendants [...] victims of British rule and landlord rapacity, exiles from our beautiful and poetic land.”²⁶ It was first serialized in John Mitchel’s *The Irish Citizen* between 22 February and 5 September 1868, and then published in book form by P. O’Shea in New York. Explicitly targeting Irish-American readers to inform them about “that many atrocities perpetrated by landlords within the last 25 years,”²⁷ Nolan’s novel is based on historical events. As the preface indicates, the plot was derived from the trial of Bryan Seery for the attempted assassination of Sir Francis Hopkins in Mullingar in February 1846.

The character of Bishop Samuel Biggs, which was modelled after landlord Hopkins, is the epitome of the relentless landowner who does not care for the plight of his famine-stricken tenantry. By contrast, having come straight out of England, Biggs has no affinity at all with the Irish cottiers on his estate, thinking he is demeaning himself “to come to live in Ireland at all.”²⁸ Biggs is determined to reform them by forcing them into the Protestant Church and rooting out Catholicism among them: instead of caring for his tenants’ poverty, he raises rents and “his paramount determination was to crush the benign influence of the true faith, and to destroy the affection existing between the people and their pastors.”²⁹ To realize this plan, Biggs gives orders to build “a new church” and “a school-house [...] on the demesne,”³⁰ and soon the “proselytizing landlord and agent” Jacob Margin sends Bible-readers to pressure the tenant families into

sending their children to the Protestant school run by Biggs's two sisters.³¹ Furthermore, he has those tenants who refuse to give in to this demand of sending their infants to his school, such as Mrs. Cormac and Norah, brutally evicted.

However, despite all these efforts, Biggs cannot break the spirit of the starving people who steadfastly hold on to their Catholic beliefs: wherever the Bible-readers offer money in order to compel the tenants to have their children educated in Biggs's school, they "met a blunt refusal [...] notwithstanding the evident destitution under which the poor people were suffering." In fact, the wives generally implore their husbands "to reject the bribe," declaring "they were satisfied to endure with patience the starvation they and their little ones were suffering."³² Mrs. Cormac summons up all her fortitude to withstand the Evangelical who comes to collect her daughter, chasing the "sneaking Bible-reader" away by the "unearthly light that shone in the outraged woman's eyes,"³³ even if this means both she and Norah will perish of famine eventually.

THE SYMBOLICAL ROLE OF RUINS

While emphasizing the fortitude of the Catholic tenantry in the face of famine and religious oppression, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah* nonetheless foregrounds the desolation of tenant farmers such as Tony Byrnes and their families. These families' trials multiply with the arrival of the new land agent Jacob Margin, who not only takes pleasure in "presiding in person" over the "inhuman" evictions of families on the estate but also confiscates part of the cleared land to beautify his own garden.³⁴ Thus we can read that Margin creates "a smiling garden" on the grounds where the levelled "poor home" belonging to Tony Byrnes "once stood, and beautiful flowers of brilliant hue exhaled their fragrance and opened their petals to the sun, and the birds came there and sang their little hymns of praise, never knowing the bitter sorrow that had wrung burning curses on that very spot from a heart seared with human agony."³⁵ This pastoral garden from which all traces of the pulled-down ancestral home of the Byrnes have been removed forms a stark contrast with the depiction earlier on in the narrative of Mrs. Byrnes who stands forlorn next to the "heap of ruins" of the levelled cabin "she loved so well" before making her way "with cries and sobs to the house of the parish priest" in the company of her seven children.³⁶

It is interesting to compare the ruins of the family cottage, as the embodiment of the havoc wrought upon the farming classes by landowners and their agents, with the other function that ruins also have in the narrative, as sites of fomenting rebellion against the landlord. We can read that the “state of things” for which Biggs and Margin are responsible, namely the eviction of many famishing families, “made secret societies flourish where they never took root before. Nightly meetings were held in churchyards, ruined buildings, and oftenest on the heap of rubbish which marked the spot of a once happy home.”³⁷ As this passage suggests, while Biggs and Margin may seem to have the upper hand in their conflicts with the tenantry, the Catholic Irish are resilient. The ruins on the one hand symbolize the defeat of the rural Catholic population. On the other hand, they also feature what Michel Foucault would call “heterotopic” spaces of subversion: sites which are nonetheless embedded “in the very institution” of a colonized society, but which are also counter spaces where the status quo is “challenged, and overturned.”³⁸

Significantly, the passage from Nolan’s novel mentions “churchyards” among the spaces where these secret societies convene. This implies that Biggs’s efforts to root out Catholicism are countered by the local rural population’s undying resistance to Protestantism and the landed class. As Stuart McLean and Kevin Whelan have observed in their research on nineteenth-century Ireland, ruins signal loss and destruction, but they may conversely also be regarded as sites which enable the retrieval of memories of former days, in the face of colonial powers that sought to eliminate the indigenous population’s pasts. Ruins can therefore signify cultures that have disappeared or have been relegated to forgetfulness. By contrast, they can also “invoke an otherwise vanished past,”³⁹ which functions as a form of “counter-memory” of socially marginalized groups, “which answers back to history.”⁴⁰ Reading Nolan’s novel against the background of these studies, the ruins of churchyards appear to symbolize Biggs’s destruction of the Catholic farmers and their faith, but at the same time, they also suggest a smoldering defiance that cannot be extinguished.

We see that ruined buildings resonate with similar meanings in Anna Hanson Dorsey’s *Nora Brady’s Vow*. This novella was clearly written from a Catholic perspective. American-born Dorsey descended from an Irish Quaker, Sarah Grubb, through her father, navy chaplain William McKenney.⁴¹ In 1840, 3 years after marrying Lorenzo Dorsey, she converted to Catholicism, and subsequently, she became one of the pioneer authors of Catholic literature in the United States.⁴² Dorsey contributed

regularly to the magazine *Ave Maria* and the Irish American *The Pilot*. In fact, *Nora Brady's Vow* was originally published in instalments in this Boston-based periodical in 1857,⁴³ and only later appeared in book form, together with *Mona the Vestal*, a narrative about a druidess converted by St Patrick. Catholicism also plays an important role in *Nora Brady's Vow*, for it offers Mary Halloran consolation and strength when her husband John has to flee the country for his involvement in the 1848 Young Ireland rebellion: "Amen [...] we are in our Father's hands. We are under the protection of our blessed and dear Lady. We may suffer,—oh, yes, that we must expect,—but, in the end, peace and rest must come."⁴⁴

In *Nora Brady's Vow* the "ruins of the old feudal castle and abbey of Fada-Brae,"⁴⁵ the ancestral home of Mary's originally Catholic, aristocratic family, signify the material collapse of the woman protagonist during the Famine era. In the absence of her husband, who has fled to the United States, Mary Halloran's fortunes are severely affected by the "blight [...] on the potatoes."⁴⁶ Consequently, she is forced to sell "the ould McCarthy More siller and jewels" and other possessions, and with her son Desmond and her daughter Grace, she seeks shelter in the "ruined halls of [her] ancestors... the princely McCarthy Mores."⁴⁷ There, "scarcely a portion" offers shelter "from the weather," but nevertheless some of the former retreats of the saints can be "rendered habitable."⁴⁸ The decay of the castle and its abbey mirrors further ruin that awaits Mary, as her young daughter dies of typhoid fever. The extract from the novel at the end of this chapter depicts the bereaved mother who has buried her infant at the graveyard within "the gray old ruins of Fada-Brae" and comes to mourn her loss: "Planted by a mother's hand, and watered by such tears as only mothers shed, they were precious memorials of the little sleeper below."⁴⁹

The "tombs [...] all more or less dilapidated" of "mitered abbots, monks, princes, and knights,"⁵⁰ suggest an analogy between Mary's suffering and loss during the Famine and the disappearance of the older Celtic nobility and Catholic orders during previous decades of British imperialism. The castle ruins serve as mournful, fading testimonies of the eliminated power of Celtic noble families, such as the McCarthy Mores, who had reigned before Ireland was colonized by England. The neglected burial places enshrine the forgotten past glory of the Irish Celts ever "since Ireland had become an English province," and since survivors of its lineage had "gone abroad and lived and died in the Catholic countries of Europe, preferring exile to a sight of the grievances and oppressions which they could not remove, and which each year became more hopeless."⁵¹

Dorsey's novella thus laments the oppression of Catholics in colonial Ireland in the past and present, through representations of ruins that also signify loss during the Great Famine. In this manner, the ruins connect to various episodes of Ireland's history under Britain's rule.

CATHOLIC SITES OF MEMORY

At the same time, the novella's preface also implies that these ruins which testify to Ireland's past glory are signs of its rich and longstanding civilization. While the English deride the Irish for lack of refinement and have subjected them to "a haughty and intolerant government," the author claims, they forget that when the English were still "slaves of Rome [...] living in caves or mud huts," "Ireland was basking in the zenith of national prosperity and civilization."⁵² As such, ruins are represented as symbols of past grandeur that subvert imperial bias. The earlier quoted scene in the graveyard where Mary Halloran bemoans her daughter's passing even creates the impression of regeneration. It is spring and the "hawthorn hedge-rows were white with blossoms."⁵³ Even if death is a prevalent presence there, the cemetery with its age-old tombs conveys a pastoral peacefulness, as it wears "the likeness of Eden."⁵⁴ In this bower of quiet and blossom, Mary Halloran realizes that her daughter lives on in heaven and as such, will be reunited with her in the afterlife: "Thus murmured the bereaved mother, with her eyes fixed on the blue, bright distance which rolled like ocean-waves, though silently, between her and the heavenly country where her child awaited her."⁵⁵

The passage thus ends on a note of hopefulness and renewal, and the fact that the blue sky Mary gazes on is compared to "ocean waves" already prefigures where this new life of regeneration lies: across the Atlantic. Mary and Desmond take the ship to Boston to be reunited with John and with their maid servant Nora Brady who had made the transatlantic crossing earlier on to look for John. The final chapter, parts of which are included in extract two from the novella, reveals that Mary and John find a new and prosperous home and in "the course of a year Nora saw another little Grace lying on Mary Halloran's breast."⁵⁶ Nora and her lover from Ireland, Denis Byrne, are reunited, and partially thanks to savings she made and their hard work, together they set up a flourishing business which also trades with Ireland. Prospects for renewal are therefore envisaged in America rather than Ireland, even though the novel's final parts, set when Desmond has come of age, suggest a future in Ireland as well.

Desmond travels back to Glendariff to successfully reclaim possession of the family estate despite “a formidable array of objections interposed by the ever-active and argus-eyed government officials regarding the matter.”⁵⁷

Apart from Desmond, however, the other characters remain in America, even when the ban on John Halloran’s return is lifted. The future of the Irish, the novel appears to tell its readers, lies across the Atlantic. This notion is strengthened by the fact that Mary and Desmond’s migration to the New World is accompanied by a translocation of Grace’s coffin, “marblehead” and “footstone” which “carefully packed and stowed away” on a transatlantic ship are taken to John “that it might be laid where he could sometimes go and weep beside it.”⁵⁸ Grace’s grave thus becomes what Ann Rigney calls a “portable monument” in a literal sense.⁵⁹ it brings memories of home—including painful ones of the Famine era—into the New World.

Furthermore, this part of the narrative implies that the Irish can create new *lieux de mémoire* in their host societies that inextricably connect their native country and America. *Nora Brady’s Vow*, through the character of the eponymous heroine, furthermore suggests to its Irish-American readers that staying true to the religion of the homeland is fundamental to achieving this success across the Atlantic. Becoming a domestic servant after her immigration to Boston, Nora fares well and can even send some money to her former mistress Mary, because she is not open to the temptations around her, does not neglect confession and displays “religious sincerity and steady morals.”⁶⁰ Furthermore, Nora successfully finds John Halloran’s whereabouts through her integration into Catholic networks, such as “The Pilot Office” which helps her in her quest.⁶¹ As such, the novella endorses the same values as much of the didactic fiction of the Catholic Famine diaspora, written by Father Hugh Quigley, Peter McCorry and Mary Anne Sadlier, which promoted Catholicism as one of the founding pillars of a distinct Irish American identity.⁶²

In her fiction, Sadlier also foregrounds Catholic values by mapping out the cultural legacies of Ireland’s once glorious Catholic pasts in the shape of ruins of abbeys and convents. In *Elinor Preston*, the heroine is greatly impressed by the “three ruined abbeys” of the Mac Carthys and O’Donoghues, which are “grand and beautiful even in decay.”⁶³ The spectacle brings Elinor into what she calls “a delicious trance, wherein the past and present were softly, mellowly blended,”⁶⁴ which suggests the lasting reverence the buildings inspire in later generations of Catholics, and the

invincibility of the Catholic faith in Ireland. In *New Lights*, an interesting indoors conversation takes place between Eleanor Ousely—the daughter of a heartless Anglo-Irish landlord—her father’s English guests Captain Hampton and his spouse Caroline and Englishman James Trelawney. As the first extract at the end of this chapter indicates, Captain Hampton can understand why the proselytizers’ attempts to convert the Irish are fruitless, since there are so many remnants of Ireland’s glorious Catholic past scattered around the island, as “embodiments of a memorial consciousness.”⁶⁵ These are ruins, “monuments of Catholic piety and Catholic worship [...] monasteries, and cathedrals, and churches, and stone-crosses” that ‘last even in the midst of market-places.’⁶⁶

The fact that these buildings are mere ruins suggests the ways in which Irish Catholicism was beaten down by the English. However, at the same time the survival of their traces all over Ireland, the conversation suggests, continues to inspire believers across the island in the steadfastness of their faith. Catholicism is here represented as the much-treasured religion of the Irish who will not stray from the fold despite British domination. Additionally, Eleanor’s contribution to the drawing-room discussion implies that the ruins testify to a rich pre-colonial civilization. She proposes to take James Trelawney on a tour of the “old Carmelite monastery” at Loughrea, which is “well worthy of attention, as a specimen of the ecclesiastical architecture of that period.”⁶⁷ Eleanor stresses the aesthetic rather than the religious value of this site that dates from before the English occupation, thereby countering traditional English bias regarding Ireland’s culture.⁶⁸

ASCENDANCY WOMEN AS CHAMPIONS OF IRISH CATHOLICISM

In stark contrast to Eleanor Ousely’s expressed admiration for Irish monastic ruins stands Caroline Hampton, who states that she “wouldn’t bother my brain” with knowledge about Ireland’s rich religious heritage, “for it is not worth half the trouble that’s taken with it!”⁶⁹ While her husband, Captain Hampton and James Trelawney are captivated by Eleanor’s conversation about Catholic monuments, this English woman chooses to remain ignorant of Ireland’s past, as her husband underlines: “for anyone who knows you would never dream of burthening your memory with anything relating to Ireland.”⁷⁰ Sadlier does not appear to attribute

Caroline Hampton's disinterest so much to her gender, but more to her ethnicity and her English prejudice towards Ireland and its Catholic traditions. Caroline figures as a foil to Eleanor as a young woman representative of the Ascendancy in this respect. Eleanor openly criticizes her father's adamant support of proselytizers, emphasizing that it fails to solve the large-scale problems of hunger among the tenantry: "not a mouthful of bread for the starving, but plenty of tracts and Bibles."⁷¹

Furthermore, Eleanor presents an alternative model of the Ascendancy to her father's: she is inspired by the feudal ideal according to which the landed class not only has rights but the duty to care for and lead the way to the laborer's "advancement."⁷² Thus when Cormac and Daniel O'Daly decide to emigrate to America, she "prevail[s] upon her mother to send down several articles likely to be useful to the young men."⁷³ She is concerned about Honora O'Daly's health and visits the tenants to monitor their well-being regularly. As a result, Eleanor is regarded as "the protectress of her father's poor tenantry, their advocate, and their benefactress."⁷⁴ In contrast with her careless father, she empathizes with the people's sufferings during the Famine: "I was just thinking of the very great contrast which there is between our condition and that of the poor people from whom my father draws his income."⁷⁵

Through this benevolence to the impoverished cottiers, Eleanor conforms to the traditional idea of Ascendancy femininity. As Margaret Kelleher claims, women in landowner's families were often involved in "private charity," providing "soup and clothing to tenants, visiting their homes,"⁷⁶ and bearing responsibility for the administration of local schools. However, Eleanor also goes beyond this conventional role in that she sympathizes with and eventually embraces the Catholic faith of the tenant farmers. Whereas her father is a fervent anti-Catholic, swearing he will "put down Popery as far as I was able,"⁷⁷ Eleanor is more open-minded towards Catholicism, through the influence of her aunt. As a result, she has "no objection to worship God with Catholics,"⁷⁸ and attends mass along with the tenants after Honora O'Daly dies. In fact, during the funeral mass, Eleanor is so moved by "the rapt devotion of the simple cottagers who knelt around" that she eventually converts to Catholicism in secret.⁷⁹ Thus, she rebels against her father's paternal and religious authority, but, despite this decision, manages to reconcile with Ousely at the narrative conclusion. What is more, she inspires English aristocrat James Trelawney, whom she eventually marries, to accept the

Catholic creed as well. As such, in *New Lights*, the Ascendancy maiden comes to embody a Catholic devotion that transcends barriers of class.

A young female member of the landed class, who is even raised in England, plays a similar role in Nolan's *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*. Clara Menville, Biggs's niece, feels pity for the orphaned and evicted Norah Gilmartin when the latter arrives at the landlord's house in an emaciated, feverish state. When the girl dies in the cold after being brutally turned away by Biggs, Clara upbraids her uncle for his lack of compassion, especially since he is a man of the church: "I also believe the Almighty would not suffer an innocent sheep to perish at the door of the pastor if he were worthy of the name."⁸⁰ Her indignation leaves Biggs feeling tormented by "those bitter words of Clara."⁸¹ Clara's concern for the famishing tenantry contrasts with the indifference shown by Biggs's two sisters whose help to the peasantry is limited to bearing "the hitherto benighted parents the joyful intelligence" that they can send the children to the rector's school.⁸² Moreover, Clara's open-mindedness towards the tenantry and their religious convictions is in sharp contrast to the intolerance towards Ireland that the bishop's two sisters and Biggs's maid Jemima Jenkins display. Arriving in Ireland from England, they complain that in their new country of residence, "such a wild place," there "is no chance of society."⁸³

Like Sadlier's Eleanor, Clara moreover converts to the religion that her uncle is so fervently opposed to, Catholicism. We can read that upon her return to England in the following year, "Clara had the happiness to become acquainted in London with dear Father Faber the very angel of converts and under his spiritual guidance she, with the consent of her father, entered the one sheepfold of the one shepherd."⁸⁴ What is more, Clara even decides to enter the convent as "Sister Norah," in remembrance of the famished girl who perished at her uncle's doorstep.⁸⁵ Nolan thus represents a visit to famine-stricken Ireland as the inspiration for conversion to the "true faith." In fact, both her novel and Sadlier's *New Lights* resort to a plot of spiritual rebirth in reverse that counters the proselytization narrative contained in the texts.

How can we account for the centrality of such a recurrent narrative template in fiction written primarily for an Irish-American market?⁸⁶ Partially, these plotlines set during Ireland's Great Famine, which foreground steadfastness of belief in the face of religious persecution and envisage the possibility of a conversion of the Anglo-Irish or English upper echelons of society, can be explained by the religious bias immigrants of the Famine generation encountered in the New World, and by the

exposure to other faiths to which these immigrants were subject. How important the issue of retaining the Catholic faith was as a distinct marker of Irishness can be gleaned from the prefaces of Catholic literature written for the Irish North-American market. For example, in line with the politics of the Devotional Revolution,⁸⁷ Sadlier's preface to her novel *Bessy Conway* (1861) admonishes the "simple-hearted peasant girls of Ireland" to "retain their home-virtues and follow the teachings of religion" in the corrupting, Protestant American cities, "these great Babylons of the West."⁸⁸ At the same time, these plotlines endorse the desire for a communal global Irish identity. This becomes visible in the authors' introductions. Thus Sadlier dedicates *New Lights* not only to the "faithful, and much-enduring people of Ireland," whose exemplary fortitude under extreme hardship demonstrates their strong ties to the Catholic faith, she also addresses those Irish men and women who, like herself, "have left the graves of our fathers, to seek a home beneath foreign skies" but who are nonetheless forever "bound together by the one glorious bond: our ancient, our time-honored, our never-changing faith."⁸⁹ Catholicism functions as the glue that cements diasporic identities and connects home and host communities. As Dorsey's preface to *Nora Brady's Vow* intimates, women play a central role in preserving those ties between America and "Ireland" which immigrants "always speak of as 'home.'" As Dorsey suggests, "[t]he devotion and generosity of the Irishwomen who live in our midst, to friends and kindred at home" connect the United States with Ireland,⁹⁰ as national virtues that immigrant women like her character Norah Brady bring to transatlantic communities. Women writers such as Nolan, Dorsey, and Sadlier may have felt they were barely stepping beyond "the quiet shades of retirement" that were women's natural sphere, as Sadlier wrote in the preface to *Tales of the Olden Times* (1845).⁹¹ In reality, they contributed significantly to the religious and ethnic politics of North-American diasporic communities.

EXCERPT 1: MARY ANNE SADLIER, *NEW LIGHTS; OR LIFE IN GALWAY* (NEW YORK, BOSTON, MONTREAL: D. & J. SADLIER AND CO., 1853), 282–88

Ousely went down with visible reluctance, whereupon the company began to discuss the subject of the proselytizing system, and it was generally admitted to be one of the grand humbugs of the age.

“And a humbug which is likely to produce the most serious and lasting evils,” said Dixon—that is, as far as it produces anything. Now, I am a Protestant. I belong to the church by law established in these realms, nor have I the slightest intention of ever leaving it, for to tell the truth, I neither know nor want to know, any other form of Christianity, but I am perfectly convinced, and that from ocular demonstration, that there is not the shadow of a chance of effecting a change in the religion of the Irish people. The Catholic religion is a part of their very nature—it is intertwined with all their dearest and most glorious associations; it is peculiarly adapted to the nature of man; it is essentially a religion of comfort and consolation, and, therefore, dear to the suffering and the poor, and the consequence is that it is scarcely ever rooted out from a country where it has once been planted.”

“Witness our own England!” said Hampton, “where it is now springing up with renovated strength, after an interval of 300 years, during which it was supposed to be dead!”

“Oh! it was only taking a nap!” said Amelia. “Its slumbers were watched over all the time by those venerable worthies, the Vicars Apostolic!”

“And so they do, captain, so they really do,” said Dixon. “That is precisely the feeling wherewith they are regarded by the nation at large, as far as I can see!—and no wonder—they bring it on themselves.”

“But really, Frederick,” said his wife, laughing heartily, “one would suppose you were half a Catholic yourself. Where in the world did you pick up so much knowledge about this Ireland?—I’m sure I wouldn’t bother my brain about it, for it is not worth half the trouble that’s taken with it! If it depended on me, the Irish might have their religion, and welcome!”

“Not a doubt of it, Caroline,” replied the captain—“and I don’t think you are far wrong. As to your wonder at my knowing anything of Irish history, we’ll let that pass, for any one who knows you would never dream of your burthening your memory with anything relating to Ireland. I only want to set you and this good company right about my probable tendency to Catholicity. No! no!—it is a religion that would never do for me, because of its various mortifications and humiliations. I respect it, I confess, but, by George! I’d rather see any one else embrace its tenets than myself. If I were some 30 years older, then, indeed, I would have less objection, but no!”—he shook his head with comical gravity—then starting to his feet, led Eleanor to the piano, saying—“Pshaw! what a dull subject we have been harping on for the last half hour!—Do, pray. Miss

Ousely, let us have some enlivening music. You play Bellini's grand marches, do you not?" Eleanor smiled assent, and the whole company was soon listening entranced to the "witchery of sweet sounds."

By the time the march was concluded, Ousely made his appearance, and announced that he had at last got rid of O'Hagarty. "And a d—d bore he is, too. I wish the Protection Society would send us a better specimen of a converted priest—I begin to despise this fellow, curse him!"

"I rather think," said Dixon, archly, "that it isn't the Society's fault—if they had better, they'd send better, that's all. You must only take him as you find him, for if you wait for a good, moral, intelligent priest from the Protection Society, you'll wait a long time, I can tell you. Such priests are only to be found in the Church of Rome—they never leave it."

Ousely was about to make an angry retort, when Trelawney proposed a game at whist, in compliance with a significant gesture from Mrs. Ousely. Seeing, however, that Eleanor and Amelia were looking over a volume of engravings, he contrived to be left out, and joined the young ladies.

"I thought you were going to take a hand!" said Amelia, pushing a chair towards him. "It was a pretty thing for you to propose cards, and then take yourself off. I fancy we have the pole-star somewhere about here; eh, Eleanor! what do you think?"

"I really don't know," said Eleanor, though her conscious blush spoke a different language. "I have not been accustomed to consider the astronomical bearings of this room." Just then her eyes met Trelawney's and the blush deepened on her cheek. Amelia smiled and shook her head.

"Well! well, good people, I'll be generous for once. What did you think of Captain Hampton's defence of Popery, cousin Trelawney?"

"I thought it very creditable to his head and heart," replied the baronet; "he has read more and thought more than one would suppose. By the bye! Miss Ousely—"

"Nonsense!" cried Amelia; "why don't you call her Eleanor, as I do? You may as well break the ice at once!—how very ceremonious you are with your Miss Ousely." And she imitated his tone so perfectly, that the others laughed heartily.

"Well!" said Trelawney, "I was going to ask, when you stopped me, whether there were any of those old monasteries in this neighborhood. I should like, of all things, to see some of them."

"You need not wish long, then," said Eleanor, "for we have one at Loughrea, within a few hours' ride of us. There is an old Carmelite monastery there, which dates back to the first years of the fourteenth century.

It is a very interesting relic of the past greatness of Ireland, and is well worthy of attention, as a specimen of the ecclesiastical architecture of that period. We can make up a party and go there, the first fine day that comes."

"You will oblige me by doing so," said Trelawney, "as I may not soon have an opportunity of seeing such a sight, and it will give me real pleasure."

"It will be a mournful pleasure, I warn you," said Eleanor, "for I defy any one to spend an hour there without falling into a meditative mood. Even our Amelia here—wild girl that she is—"

"Thank you kindly!" said Amelia, with mock gravity; "but I'm not very fond of meditating, like Hervey, 'among the tombs'—I leave that to you serious people. Still, if you think of visiting Loughrea Abbey, I have no objection to be of the party." "What do you think of asking the Reverend Mr. O'Hagarty?" she suddenly added, with a smile.

"I rather think," said Trelawney, "that the excellent gentleman is not much of an antiquary. I should suppose him more interested in the respective qualities of Port and Claret, than in the different styles of architecture, or the progressive history of Christian art. But I see your father is on the move, Amelia."

"I declare, so he is! I must be off and get on my muffling!" So saying, away she ran, leaving Eleanor and Trelawney *tete-a-tete* for a moment. The only words that passed between them was a whispered inquiry from Trelawney, as to where the O'Dalys had taken shelter, and Eleanor's brief reply that Phil Maguire had made his home theirs. By this time the guests were all in motion, and carriage after carriage rolled from the door.

EXCERPT 2: ALICE NOLAN, *THE BYRNES OF GLENGOULAH: A TRUE TALE* (NEW YORK: P. O'SHEA, 1868), 207–10

We may well surmise that this state of things made secret societies flourish where they never took root before. Nightly meetings were held in church-yards, ruined buildings, and oftenest on the heap of rubbish which marked the spot of a once happy home. Those societies were unknown in Glengoulah during the agency of Mr. De Courcy, while they were in full blast in the neighboring mining districts under the management of Margin.

Now all the evicted tenantry were invited to join them. Many did so, and others refused to have any- thing to do with midnight assemblies and secret oaths. Among the latter was Bryan Dempsey, who would never

listen to their solicitations. As to To-ney Byrne, they never even dared to name it to him, his religious principles being too well known.

One night a meeting of this kind was held, and “the Right Reverend Samuel Wilson Biggs, Lord Bishop of Ardmore and Glengoulah by the grace of—Act of Parliament, was indicted before Judge Starlight for the wilful murder of the widow Cormac, the widow Hynes’s child, and Peter, Mary and Bridget Flannigan, besides many, many others, too numerous to mention; also, for depriving Norah Cormac of her reason by brutal treatment in forcing her to attend his proselytizing school, etc., etc.”

Witnesses were called and duly examined, but as these cases are already known to the reader it is un-necessary to repeat them here.

The last witness who gave his testimony was Mi-chael Flannigan. He was an old man, with bent form, and hair white as snow. He tottered forward and took from his breast pocket a soiled and torn letter, blotched in many places by the blistering tears dropped upon it. The sight of it sent a shiver through his aged frame, and, as soon as he could speak, he exclaimed:

“Boys, ye all know my fine, manly boy Peter, turned of three and twenty, and my two putty little girls that couldn’t brook to see their mother and me in hardship. When we were put out of the ould place they all emigrated to America, lavin’ us for a while on my cousin Jack Flannigan’s floor. A good friend he ever proved to me and mine—God bless him for it! We were only one week turned out when they went to America. Read this letter; they wrote it to the mother and me from Liverpool.”

One of the men stepped forward and read the letter. It was, as usual with Irish letters, brimful of the heart, every second line being dear father and mother: “Don’t fret for us, dear father and mother; we are young and strong, thanks be to God for it. We will soon earn a comfortable home for ye both, dear father and mother—a home where old Biggs can’t get us, and ye’ll end your days in pace, plaze God. Keep up your hearts, dear father and mother; time wont be long passin’, we’ll soon see one another again. Pray to God and his Blessed Mother for us—we’re to sail tomorrow, dear father and mother, in a fine ship called the ‘Ocean Spray.’ They say she goes a’most as fast as a steamer, and looks grand on the water. God bless you, dear pa-rents; you’ll soon hear again, plaze God, from your lovin’ children. Till death.

Peter, Mary, and Bridget Flannigan.”

After a few moments the old man, whose head was bowed to his knees and covered with his hands while the letter was reading, rose up again and said, in a trembling voice: “My children never seen the American shore:

the ship went down in the Irish say, where she came agin a steamer in a fog, and over four hundred emigrants perished. My heart's treasures were drowned in sight of the very hills where they were born and played through many a summer day.

"I buried their mother in three weeks in Tinmanogue—her heart broke; and now I'm childless, homeless, and well nigh upon 70 years. If they were left in the ould place, and not forced by a tyrant to transport themselves, my children would be alive today; and I now accuse ould Biggs of being their murderer."

"What did he eject you for?" asked Judge Star-light. "Did you pay your rent?" "Yes, to the farthin'; here is my last resate."

"Well, you had no child young enough to go to school. I don't see what excuse he had to put you out." "The bailiff told me he said I was a dangerous character, because *I lent Father O' Tool a cart?*"

EXCERPT 3: ANNA DORSEY, *NORA BRADY'S VOW* (BOSTON: P. DONAHUE, 1869), 148–50

The hawthorn hedge-rows were white with blossoms, and on the brae-side violets opened their blue eyes under the tangled fern, while daisies, in fair constellations, gleamed here and there above the springing grass. The note of the cuckoo was heard ringing at intervals through the air, as, attended by her little brownie, she flitted from tree to tree. Down into the valley rushed a mountain-brook, making wild music as it leaped in frothy cascades over its rocky bed, then winding gently and brightly away, like a thread of silver, through the fertile and picturesque vale, while here and there small plantations of willows which grew along its banks threw their long, green tresses right lovingly into its laughing waters.

High up, in the blue, silent depths of heaven, fleecy clouds, with the golden sunshine on them, floated softly away, and wreathed themselves like coronals or hung in gleaming draperies on the summits and around the peaks of the distant mountains, while the balmy westerly winds gently unfolded the timid leaves and blossoms. Earth would have worn that day the likeness of Eden, but that in the golden sunlight the decay of Time and the triumphs of Death told another tale. Amid the spring verdure, touched here and there with sunlit halos, the gray old ruins of Fada-Brae looked grand and beautiful. The clinging mosses, no longer brown, looked like draperies of velvet festooned from turret and tower, so rich and green was

the tint they wore; while the ivy, with its dark, glistening leaves, garlanded, like deathless memories, the silent cloisters below. Amid them lay the dead of ages,—mitered abbots, monks, princes, and knights.

The tombs were all more or less dilapidated,—at least, those of an ancient date,—and some were quite despoiled of the stone or marble effigies which had decorated them, and which now lay grimly on the earth, almost overgrown by the rank grass of the place. It had been for centuries the burial-place of the McCarthy Mores, though but few of their number had been laid there since Ireland had become an English province,—those who could afford it having gone abroad and lived and died in the Catholic countries of Europe, preferring exile to a sight of the grievances and oppressions which they could not remove, and which each year became more hopeless.

Mrs. Halloran's parents were slumbering there, and near them was a little grave, around which clusters of violets were planted like a garland, that, being in full bloom, sent out their spicy odors like incense on the air. Planted by a mother's hand, and watered by such tears as only mothers shed, they were precious memorials of the little sleeper below. The marble cross at the head of the grave, with its elaborate carving and soaring dove, now gleaming brightly in the sunshine, spoke not to the heart as did those flowers, those living types of the life of the soul and the resurrection of the body. Mrs. Halloran and Desmond had spent the morning there, talking of the last spring they were all at Glendariff together, and of 'the little lady' now so sweetly sleeping at their feet; of how she used to watch the unfolding of her favorite flowers and listen daily for the notes of the birds she best loved. Her little wise sayings were repeated, and her quiet laugh remembered, with a sad smile; then the questions she used to ask, so full of deep meaning, were suggested, as if by an angel, to lead the grief-worn heart of that mourning mother from the dust to the eternal heavens, where, in a truer, a fuller, a more blissful life, the child of her bosom was cared for more tenderly and surrounded by a more ineffable love than even her yearning heart could conceive of.

"No: she is not here," said Mary Halloran, laying her hand on the little mound. "It is only the little earth-garb that we were used to see her in,—the veil our angel wore, and which, of the dust, belongs to the dust, yet still beloved because it was hers, and because every atom will again be gathered together and fashioned anew to receive for eternity the glorified being which, although living, we no longer see." Thus murmured the bereaved mother, with her eyes fixed on the blue, bright distance which

rolled like ocean-waves, though silently, between her and the heavenly country where her child awaited her; thus she sought to comfort herself, and consecrate the crown of thorns which so deeply pierced her.

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In a few weeks Mary Halloran and Desmond, with Dennis to protect them, were on the broad seas, on their way to Boston, where a fair and beautiful home and loving and friendly hearts awaited their coming. In one of the state-rooms of the ship, so carefully guarded that Mrs. Halloran herself kept the key, was a large case, so heavy that it took six stout sailors to lift it in. Dennis Byrne had given out mysterious hints about its containing the old silver, gold, and jewels of the family, and the tars troubled themselves no more about it, except to say, every now and then, that it was a wonder to see a lady, who had such piles of gold and silver, look so miserable and pale as Mrs. Halloran did. The captain was in the secret; for the freight of that mysterious case had added one hundred and fifty pounds to the profits of the voyage.

It was a shell within a shell. The outer one was of oak, banded with iron; within was another of lead, which contained one of rosewood, which held a small, fragile, withered form, which was once a living, breathing, loving child. It was the body of little Grace, which her father had directed to be brought to him, that it might be laid where he could sometimes go and weep beside it. In the hold of the ship, with their other effects, were the marble head and footstone, carefully packed and stowed away.

Nora Brady's vow was not broken. She accomplished much toward its fulfillment; and God, blessing her earnest endeavor, provided for the rest. Her day-dreams turned to real, substantial things; she saw those she loved, reunited and happy,—which was reward enough she thought. But the most acceptable and beautiful virtue of the human heart, after charity, is gratitude; and it is one which God sees fit, in His divine providence, to reward many times, even on earth.

In the course of a year Nora saw another little Grace lying on Mary Halloran's breast; she saw Dennis Byrne set up in a thriving business by Mr. Halloran, who, in the receipt of abundant supplies from Ireland, was enabled to establish him on a capital basis, which gave him an opportunity to develop his resources and capacities for business without embarrassment; and, as the year closed in, Nora became the wife of her long-tried and faithful lover. She drew two hundred dollars, all that was left of Mr. Mallow's gift, and furnished neatly and substantially a small house, where she lived in happiness and comfort,—content with her station, and serving

God with a cheerful and willing heart. And, after years had passed away and Nora's children gathered around her, they removed to a larger and handsomer house,—a house which we have been in before, but which, with its modern repairs and elegant improvements, we can scarcely recognize. Mr. Mallow had claimed the promise she made him when she refused to be his wife, not only for himself but for Mrs. Sydney, who, old and infirm, could no longer help herself. With Nora Byrne they found a safe and happy asylum for their declining days; and it is said that, after applying a portion of his wealth to the establishment of a 'poor man's bank,' Mr. Mallow intended to divide the rest between Nora's children.

Need we say that the bond between the Hallorans and the Byrnes grew stronger with time, and that the troubled days of the past were often spoken of between them with deep emotion? When the anniversary of Gracie's death, or rather her birth into immortal life, came round, it was Mr. Halloran's way to gather Nora's children and his own and take them out to the little grave; and, while they wreathed the tomb and grave with flowers, he would tell them, in tender yet cheerful accents, the brief but beautiful history of her life, and of its holy passing away. Ellen remained at home, and, at Mrs. Halloran's request, was installed as housekeeper at Glendariff, to take care of and show the place; for it had become a place of pilgrimage for strangers,—indeed, for all who had heard its history and who dared to go to the verge of treason and do honor to John Halloran. And if you wish to know how Nora prospers, go to the large and substantial new warehouse on the right hand side of dock, and ask the portly, prosperous merchant within, how he gets on. You can easily find the place; for over the door is written, in large black letters, *Byrne & Co.*; and the Co. is good Thomas McGinnis.

Desmond is of age, and has gone to take possession of his estate. There was, at first, a formidable array of objections interposed by the ever-active and argus-eyed government officials regarding the matter, and the affair was carried before the courts, and referred finally to the decision of the Lord Lieutenant, who, being more liberal than his predecessor, and wishing to conciliate the Catholic gentry and people of Ireland, allowed the young heir to enter on the full possession of his estate, its immunities and privileges. While the affair was pending, he was the guest of Major O'Grady, whose beautiful daughter Florence, it is whispered, will, in a year or so, be mistress of Glendariff.

Influential friends at home, who had never ceased to interest themselves to obtain permission for John Halloran to return to Ireland, at

length met with a questionable success; but the pardon was so trammelled with conditions which would have embarrassed and annoyed him on all occasions when he might have aided his countrymen, at least by his advice, and which the slightest public interest in passing events would have been construed into treason, that he rejected it with indignation, and besought his friends, as they honored him, never to make another attempt of the kind in his behalf. A good citizen, whose position and influence rank high,—prosperous and honored,—his adopted country feels proud of his virtues and talents, and respects the Faith which he illustrates so nobly in his life.

The widow Blake was not forgotten by our exiles in their prosperity, but received kindly and generous aid from them in her undertakings, which led to substantial comfort,—for which she never ceased to thank God, and always referred to the night Mr. Halloran fell insensible on her steps, as the most fortunate day of her life.

And when, in the quiet twilight hour, John Halloran and his wife often talked, in low, tender tones, over the troubled past, they never failed to refer to Nora Brady's Vow as the cause of their restored happiness.

NOTES

1. Mrs J. Sadlier 1861, *Elinor Preston: or, Scenes at Home and Abroad* (New York and Boston: D & J. Sadlier and Co.), 191.
2. See, for example, Cormac Ó Gráda 2000, *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory* (Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press), 88, 94–5; and Andrés Eiríksson 2019, “Paupers and Beggars Brats”: Parsonstown Workhouse and Union Policy during the Famine,” in Marguérite Corporaal and Peter Gray (eds) *The Great Irish Famine and Social Class: Conflicts, Responsibilities, Representations* (Oxford & New York: Peter Lang), 173–203.
3. Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad 2010, “Introduction,” in *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 2
4. Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson 2014, “Introduction,” in *The Transcultural Turn: Interrogating Memory Between and Beyond Borders* (Berlin: De Gruyter), 19.
5. See “Anna Hanson Dorsey” 1913, in Charles Herbermann (ed.) *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5 (New York: Robert Appleton Company), 116.
6. For the term, see Pierre Nora 1989, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations* 26: 12.

7. Stacey Donohue 2001, "Mary Anne Sadlier (1820–1903)," in Mary R. Reichardt (ed.) *Catholic Women Writers: A Bio-bibliographical Sourcebook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood), 333.
8. See Marjorie Howes 2006, *Colonial Crossings: Figures in Irish Literary History* (Dublin: Field Day), 37.
9. See William D. Kelly 1891, "A Benefactress of Her Race," *Ave Maria* (4 Apr.): 5
10. See Donohue, "Mary Anne Sadlier (1820–1903)," 333.
11. Liz Szabo Hernadi 2001, "Mary Anne Sadlier's Advice for Irish Catholic Girls," in Colleen MacDannell (ed) *Religions of the United States in Practice*, vol. I, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP), 197.
12. Charles Fanning 2000, *The Irish Voice in America The Irish Voice in America: 250 Years of Irish American Fiction* (Lexington KY: University Press of Kentucky), 115.
13. Mrs J. Sadlier 1864, *The Confederate Chieftains: A Tale of the Irish Rebellion of 1641* (New York: D. & J. Sadlier), 4.
14. Sadlier, *The Confederate Chieftains*, 3-4.
15. Archbishop John Hughes 1866, "The Importance of Being in Communion with Christ's One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church," Letter II, in *Complete Works of the Most Rev. Archbishop John Hughes*, vol. 1, (New York: Lawrence Kehoe), 589.
16. Donal Kerr 1996, *The Catholic Church and the Famine* (Blackrock: Columbia Press), 86.
17. Mrs J. Sadlier 1853, *New Lights; or Life in Galway* (New York, Boston, Montreal: D & J. Sadlier and Co.), 18.
18. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 33.
19. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 244.
20. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 248.
21. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 39.
22. See Anon. 1852, *American Citizens! We Appeal to You in all Calmness. Is it not Time to Pause?* (Boston, MA: J. E. Farwell and Co).
23. John Francis Maguire 1868, *The Irish in America* (New York: D. and J. Sadlier), 530.
24. "Know-Nothing Brawls" 1856, *The Pilot*, 19, no. 33: 4.
25. D.W.C. 1857, "England and her Conquest," *The Pilot*, 20, no. 50: 3.
26. Alice Nolan (1868), *The Byrnes of Glengoulah: A True Tale* (New York: P. O'Shea), frontispiece.
27. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, vi.
28. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 74.
29. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 189.
30. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 60.
31. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 178.
32. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 193.

33. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 193.
34. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 170.
35. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 176.
36. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 169.
37. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 207.
38. Michel Foucault 1986, “Of Other Spaces,” *Diacritics* 16: 24–5.
39. Stuart MacLean 2004, *The Event and Its Terrors: Ireland, Famine, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press), 28.
40. Kevin Whelan 2004, “Reading the Ruins: The Presence of Absence in the Irish Landscape,” in Howard B. Clarke et al. (eds) *Surveying Ireland’s Past: Multidisciplinary Essays in Honour of Anngret Simms* (Dublin: Geography Publications), 329.
41. Rolf Loeber and Magda Loeber 2006, “Dorsey, Anna Hanson,” in *A Guide to Irish Fiction, 1650–1900* (Dublin: Four Courts Press), 375.
42. See “Anna Hanson Dorsey,” 116.
43. See vol. 20 of *The Pilot* (1857).
44. Anna Hanson Dorsey 1869, *Nora Brady’s Vow* (Boston: P. Donahue), 35.
45. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 77.
46. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 77.
47. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 115.
48. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 78.
49. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 149.
50. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 148.
51. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 115.
52. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, vi.
53. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 148.
54. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 148.
55. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 150.
56. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 159.
57. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 160.
58. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 157.
59. Ann Rigney 2004, “Portable Monuments: Literature, Cultural Memory, and the Case of Jeanie Deans,” *Poetics Today*, 25, no.2: 383.
60. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 96.
61. Dorsey, *Nora Brady’s Vow*, 98.
62. See chapter 6 in Marguérite Corporaal 2017, *Relocated Memories: The Great Famine in Irish and Diaspora Fiction* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse UP). See also Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, chapter 3.
63. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 141.
64. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 143.
65. Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 12.
66. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 284.

67. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 287.
68. In this respect, in *New Lights* the monastic ruins feature as what Claire Connolly views as prototypical Irish nineteenth-century representations: “as an index of cultural value, encoding a future appeal to some future appreciation of a once-great civilization.” See Claire Connolly 2011, *A Cultural History of the Irish Novel, 1790–1829* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 41.
69. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 284.
70. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 285.
71. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 229.
72. For this idea see Jasper W. Rogers 1846, *Letter to the Landlords and Rate Payers of Ireland* (London: J. Ridgway), 9.
73. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 209.
74. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 130.
75. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 85.
76. Margaret Kelleher 1997, *The Feminization of Famine* (Cork: Cork University Press), 91.
77. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 199.
78. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 181.
79. Sadlier, *New Lights*, 183.
80. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 231.
81. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 231.
82. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 126.
83. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 56.
84. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 242.
85. Nolan, *The Byrnes of Glengoulah*, 336.
86. For the term see James V. Wertsch 2002, *Voices of Collective Remembering* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 14.
87. The Devotional Revolution (1850–75), led by Archbishop Paul Cullen in Ireland and archbishop John Hughes in the United States, sought to reform the Catholic church by promoting clerical discipline. The movement also promoted devotional practices such as confession, Holy Communion, the rosary, vespers, and devotion to the Sacred Heart. See Emmett J. Larkin 1972, “The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850–75,” *American Historical Review* 77: 625–52.
88. Mrs J. Sadlier 1861, *Bessy Conway; or the Irish Girl in New York* (New York: D. & J. Sadlier), 3.
89. Sadlier, *New Lights*, unnumbered page.
90. Dorsey, *Nora Brady's Vow*, unnumbered page.
91. Mrs J. Sadlier 1845, *Tales of the Olden Times* (Montreal: Lovell), 6. See also Michele Lacombe 1984, “Frying-Pans and Deadlier Weapons: The Immigrant Novels of Mary Anne Sadlier,” *Essays on Canadian Writing* 29: 100–101.



CHAPTER 3

“Six Thousand Half Forgotten Victims”: Mary Anne Sadlier, Contested Famine Memory, and French-Canadians

Jason King

In June of 1891, Mary Anne Sadlier for the first time acknowledged “the tender charity wherewith the French-Canadian people... adopted the thousands of poor orphans left in their midst, by the terrible ocean plague, receiving them as gifts from Heaven and cherishing them as their own flesh and blood.”¹ Such Irish acknowledgements of French-Canadian generosity for adopting Irish orphans had become commonplace after the publication of John Francis Maguire’s *The Irish in America* by D. and J. Sadlier & Co. in 1868;² but Mary Anne Sadlier herself had never written about own her eyewitness impressions of the Irish Famine migration to Montreal in 1847 until 41 years after the event. “Having witnessed its miseries, its horrors,” she claimed in 1891, her memories were “still fresh and vivid.”³ During that summer of 1847, approximately seventy-five

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thousand Irish Famine emigrants arrived in the city of Montreal, which had a population of fifty thousand at the time. Tens of thousands of them fell ill and ultimately six thousand perished from typhus and other infectious diseases in the city's fever sheds.⁴ The release of "the cloistered Hospitallers of St Joseph ... from their vows of life-long seclusion" to help care for the sick struck Sadlier as particularly momentous. "People pointed it out to each other with solemn wonder, as the writer well remembers, and spoke with bated breath of the awful visitation that had brought the cloistered nuns from their convent into the outer world, in obedience to the call of charity."⁵ Sadlier bore witness to this "awful visitation" less than 3 years after migrating at the age of 24 from Cootehill, County Cavan, to the Irish settlement of Sainte-Marthe in Quebec in 1844, where she married James Sadlier on 24 November 1846. The following summer she had helped him establish the Montreal office of D. and J. Sadlier & Co. beside Notre Dame Church⁶ and became one of its most popular and prolific authors, eventually transforming it into "the largest Catholic publishing house in the United States" and Canada.⁷ Her early novels, such as *Willy Burke; or the Irish Orphan in America* (1850), *Alice Riordan, the Blind Man's Daughter: A Tale for the Young* (1851), *New lights; or, Life in Galway. A tale.* (1853), *The Blakes and Flanagans: A Tale Illustrative of Irish Life in the United States*, and *Elinor Preston; or, Scenes at Home and Abroad* (1861, serialized in 1857),⁸ often featured Irish emigrant orphan or peasant protagonists resisting the threat of proselytization, although only *New Lights* is explicitly set in Famine Ireland. More to the point, she never drew upon her own experience of the "awful visitation" in these fictional works.

This chapter considers why Mary Anne Sadlier did not write about her eyewitness impressions of the Irish Famine migration until over four decades after the event. The first part examines Irish Catholic and Irish Protestant women writers' perceptions of the Famine exodus and resettlement in British North America in Mary Anne Sadlier's novel *Elinor Preston: or Scenes at Home and Abroad* and Elizabeth Hely Walshe's *Cedar Creek: From the Shanty to the Settlement. A Tale of Canadian Life* (1863–1864) and *Golden Hills: A Tale of the Irish Famine* (1865).⁹ More specifically, it compares and contrasts Sadlier and Walshe's development of Irish Catholic and Irish Protestant narrative perspectives that shape their respective impressions of French-Canadians as either exceptionally pious or feckless people who share many cultural traits with Irish Catholics. The chapter suggests that whereas Sadlier's protagonists embody a beleaguered

form of Irish Catholic identity and appear under pressure to assimilate into a hegemonic Anglo-Protestant Canadian culture, Walshe portrays British North America as a new world that is particularly susceptible for Protestant evangelicals to convert French-Canadians and Irish Catholics to their faith.¹⁰ Walshe confines her utopian vision of Canada to Anglo-Protestant Ontario, which she repeatedly contrasts unfavourably with French Catholic Quebec, whereas Sadlier celebrates the latter as the preferable destination for Famine Irish settlement. Both female authors regard French-Canadians as surrogates for Irish Catholics onto whom they project their respective impressions of improvidence and piety. Ultimately, they gravitate across the Canadian cultural, religious, and social divides to find congenial destinations for Famine Irish resettlement in Ontario and Quebec, where their coreligionists predominated. Yet their narratives of Irish emigration to British North America are also repeatedly disrupted and disturbed by anxieties of religious antagonism in the new world. They both assert their affinity or antipathy to French-Canadians as a means of conveying Irish Catholic or Irish Protestant superiority in an atmosphere of extreme confessional rivalry. They both eschew conspicuous expressions and markers of the other faith as a distinct affront to their own.

The second part of the chapter argues that Sadlier’s apprehensions about Protestant encroachment became so pronounced in 1850s Montreal that they inhibited her memory of the Famine migration as a source of literary inspiration for decades to come. In her 1891 article, “The Plague of 1847,” she explicitly placed on record the aforementioned “tender charity wherewith the French-Canadian people ... adopted the thousands of poor orphans left in their midst [... and] the rude but substantial monument erected in Point St-Charles over the graves of the *six thousand* half forgotten victims of the plague,” as her predominant memories of the Famine migration.¹¹ The Ship Fever monument, or Black Rock, had been erected on 1 December 1859 on the site of the city’s Famine Irish burial ground and fever sheds in 1847; these sheds were subsequently used to house the largely Irish Catholic workforce that started to build the Victoria Bridge across the St. Lawrence River in 1854.¹² Montreal’s Black Rock is one of the oldest Famine Irish memorials in the world, but its installation under the auspices of the city’s Protestant bishop was deeply controversial. “Despite the preponderance of Irish Catholics buried in the mass grave,” notes Colin McMahon, “representatives of the Roman Catholic hierarchy were not invited to the 1859 dedication ceremony, and thus denied the opportunity to consecrate the ground in which lay the bodies of the

faithful. Their notable absence was indicative of the growing animus that existed between Catholics and Protestants in Montreal.”¹³ The refusal of Catholic clergy at the memorial’s dedication could only be construed as a deliberate humiliation.

This growing animus between Catholics and Protestants in 1850s Montreal both helped launch Mary Anne Sadlier’s literary career but also foreclosed her memory of Montreal’s “*six thousand* half-forgotten victims” buried beneath an unconsecrated monument that was inimical to her religious beliefs. Her eyewitness impressions of the Irish Famine migration in 1847 were overshadowed by the appropriation of its public memory in the form of an ostensibly Protestant monument. Its dedication ceremony marked a complete repudiation of her literary mission. Moreover, the installation of the Black Rock coincided with the Sadliers’ departure from Montreal for New York in 1860, where she remained until the 1880s before returning to the city as a widow. Ultimately, it was not until Mary Anne Sadlier’s return and the reclamation of the Black Rock by the city’s Irish Catholic community that she began to recuperate her own impressions of Montreal’s Famine emigrants as “figures of memory” and sources of inspiration in her work.¹⁴ Four decades after the Irish influx, the Black Rock had become a site of Irish Catholic pilgrimage and communal procession.¹⁵ The active contestation of its cultural remembrance and religious meaning elicited Sadlier’s own recollections of 1847. Her eyewitness impressions of the Famine Irish migration found expression in tandem with its recuperation as an Irish Catholic monument for the emigrant dead whose memory she would endeavour to belatedly consecrate and restore.

IRISH PROTESTANT AND IRISH CATHOLIC PERCEPTIONS OF FRENCH-CANADIANS

Mary Anne Sadlier’s recollection of the Famine migration was diametrically opposed to that of the evangelical Protestant author Elizabeth Hely Walshe. Walshe’s travel narrative *Cedar Creek: From the Shanty to the Settlement. A Tale of Canadian Life* (1863–1864) and novel *Golden Hills: A Tale of the Irish Famine* (1865) were both published by The Religious Tract Society, a pan-Protestant organization founded in 1799 to help inculcate the established faith in the lower orders and later spread “foreign evangelization.”¹⁶ Christopher Morash notes that in *Golden Hills* the plot revolves around “the gallant efforts of an English Evangelical family, the

Kingstons, as they resist the ‘Riband-men’ who attempt to drive them from their Irish estate. When the potato crop fails, it is read as a direct punishment for agrarian violence.”¹⁷ Marguérite Corporaal observes that “for the lawless Ribandmen who threaten Kingston’s peaceful existence, migration is offered as a solution: [Tom Riley], who is involved in a plot to murder Kingston, is shipped off to Quebec to ‘leave the country and never return.’ The Irishmen for whom there is no sustenance should leave the nation to ‘purge’ it of indolence and starvation.”¹⁸ Indeed, Kingston’s conviction that migration could provide a remedy for Irish poverty is tempered by his realization that “the Celtic peasant would ... never be civilized till he recognized the power of his own hands and brain to raise him higher in the scale of social existence.”¹⁹ The banishment of his failed assassin to Quebec provides a fitting destination where “Celtic peasants” and their French-Canadian co-religionists languish on that scale.

Elizabeth Hely Walshe’s stigmatization of French-Canadians is more apparent in *Cedar Creek* than *Golden Hills*. Her Anglo-Irish Protestant protagonists Robert and Arthur Wynn and their Canadian companion Hiram Holt frequently disparage French-Canadian settlements as they travel down the St Lawrence River valley and then along the Ottawa River to establish a settlement in its Ontario upper reaches. *Cedar Creek* repeatedly emphasizes the cultural and religious superiority of Protestant Ontario over Catholic Quebec. When the protagonists arrive in Quebec City, their companion Captain Armytage opines that:

Quebec has a Past as well as a Present: there is the French Past, narrow, dark, crowded, hiding under a fortification; and there is the English Present, embodied in the handsome upper town ... broad, well-built, airy. The line of distinction is well marked between the pushing Anglo-Saxon’s premises and the tumble-down concerns of the stand-still *habitan*.

Perhaps, also, something is due to the difference between Protestant enterprise and Roman Catholic supineness.²⁰

Captain Armytage’s prejudice against French-Canadian obsolescence and stasis becomes synonymous with the omniscient narrator’s assertion of “Roman Catholic supineness.” It is “a line of distinction” that is demarcated within Quebec City’s very walls. The characters are similarly struck by the anachronistic spectacle of British Protestant enterprise jostling with French Catholic ecclesiasticism on the streets of Montreal, which leaves

them “wondering at the incongruities of French and English nationality grafted together, and coherent as the segments of the fabled Centaur—the active commerce of a British port carried on beneath the shadow of walled-in convents suggesting Belgium—friars endued with long black robes, passing soldiers clothed in immemorial scarlet.”²¹ In *Cedar Creek*, these “incongruities of French and English nationality” are symbolized by “black robes” and red coats that are not only irreconcilable but emblematic of declining and ascendant civilizations. It is true that Arthur Wynn later commends the “virtues” of the French-Canadian national character: “cleanliness, good-humour, good-nature—and … their habit of living all together, children settled around the parent tree like the branches of a banyan.”²² Yet, even his simile has more sinister connotations, as the “branches of a banyan” are renowned for smothering “the parent tree” in their endless proliferation of roots that grow down into the soil and become tree trunks themselves. The convivial French-Canadian family is thus envisioned to be deeply rooted but stagnant in its native soil with no prospect of branching out and settling further beyond.

Mary Anne Sadlier regarded French-Canadians much more favourably as coreligionists who were resistant to the blandishments of Protestantism. She saw no incongruity between cloistered convents and thriving ports or “black robes” and red coats crossing paths on city streets. Indeed, in her most autobiographical novel, *Elinor Preston*, the eponymous protagonist emigrates with her brother George to Montreal so that he can join his regiment and walk “the streets in the handsome uniform of a gallant … red coat”.²³ Sadlier herself marvelled at the spectacle of “cloistered nuns,” leaving their seclusion to care for Famine emigrants. She admired French-Canadians as akin to Irish Catholics in their steadfast rejection of the “nefarious system of proselytizing … in the remote and famine-stricken districts of Ireland.”²⁴ Corporaal notes that her impressions of “famine-stricken” Ireland were entirely secondhand, as Sadlier had emigrated in 1844.²⁵ Yet her recurrent narrative theme of Catholic perseverance against Protestant temptation was also based on her lived experience in Quebec. In *Elinor Preston*, she explicitly equates the French Canadian Missionary Society’s founding principle of “conversion” of the “Catholic people of Lower Canada” with “the age-long system of temptation brought to bear on the poor starving Catholics of Western Ireland, with the vain hope of drawing them away from the faith of their fathers”.²⁶ In her novel *New Lights; or, Life in Galway. A Tale* (1853), Sadlier inverts Walshe’s horticultural metaphor to stigmatize such “Protestant attempts to convert

Catholics, and above all the Catholics of Ireland” as an unnatural and foreign influence:

The Catholic religion, indigenous to the soil of Ireland, has struck its roots far and deep in the hearts and affections of her people;... whilst the Protestant creed, though preserved in a magnificent conservatory, at a prodigious cost, pines away like a sickly exotic, to which no natural vitality can be imparted.²⁷

Sadlier similarly envisioned French-Canadians to be possessed of “natural vitality” that inured them against “the Protestant creed.” Unlike Elizabeth Hely Walshe, she had lived in their midst for decades from her arrival in Quebec in 1844 until her departure for New York in 1860, and then from her return to Montreal in the 1880s until her death in 1903. Their portrayals, though, appear remarkably similar. According to Elinor Preston: “Those who have never lived among the *habitans* of Lower Canada can form no idea of their natural, unsophisticated politeness”.²⁸ Sadlier simply reverses Walshe’s insinuation of Roman Catholic indolence, obsolescence, and “supineness” into more positive “natural” unsophistication that throws into relief the “Protestant creed” as a “sickly exotic” influence and invasive species.

Her perceptions of French-Canadians were also shaped by her impressions of Catholic ecclesiastical architecture in Montreal. According to her daughter, Anna T. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston* “has been erroneously believed by many to be the story of her own life. Such is not the case, though some of the circumstances are identical.”²⁹ One such circumstance is almost certainly her protagonist’s first impression of Montreal:

Stretching apparently for miles along the margin of the great river, lay the fair city of Montreal—the chosen city of Mary—with its tin roofs reflecting the midday sun, and a stately mountain wooded to the summit, rearing its giant bulk behind for great part of the city’s length. Gloriously conspicuous about the very centre rose two massive Gothic towers, crenellated and surmounted by graceful minarets at every corner. This my heart told me was a Catholic church—most probably dedicated to the mother of Christians. So uplifted was I at the thought that it was with an anxious heart I asked a gentleman who, by his clerical costume, I judged to be a priest, what that was, pointing to the square Gothic towers.

“That—oh! that is *Notre Dame de Montreal*—commonly called here the French Church. It is the parish church of Montreal.”³⁰

Elinor Preston’s first glimpse of “the chosen city of Mary” is “the two massive Gothic Towers” of *Notre Dame Church*, completed in 1843 as the largest in North America, though she appears unaware that its original architect was an Irish-American Anglican, James O’Donnell. She instinctively recognizes the preeminent institution on the city skyline to be a Catholic edifice, one that in 1847 towered over the office of D. and J. Sadlier & Co. at the corner of *Notre Dame* and *St. Francis Xavier* streets below.³¹ Soon after her arrival, Elinor Preston comes to appreciate that *Notre Dame* is one of many Catholic ecclesiastical structures that help to define the city. “It is not without justice,” she remarks, “that Montreal is called the *Rome of America*, for surely it is a city of Catholic associations, of Catholic institutions, and, to a great extent, of Catholic morals. From the great church of *Notre Dame* and our own *St. Patrick’s*, which occupies one of the noblest sites in the neighborhoods … there are churches of every size, many of them remarkably fine specimens of art.”³² She also marvels at the frequent spectacles of Catholic religious and lay processions “appearing here and there in the moving diorama of the crowded streets. All this was, of course, new to me,” Elinor Preston insists, “and it had an indescribable charm for one who, though brought up a Catholic and among Catholics, had never seen such public manifestations of Catholicity.”³³ Indeed, these “public manifestations of Catholicity” are implicitly contrasted with its subordinate status in Ireland, as symbolized by Dublin’s Protestant *Saint Patrick’s Cathedral* that struck Preston with “the sad fate which had given these treasures of Catholic art into the hands of strangers.”³⁴

Despite her appreciation of Montreal’s Catholic ecclesiastical architecture, Elinor Preston is also disturbed by the forlorn sight of its Irish emigrant funerals. She laments “feeling the want of Catholic society”³⁵ in a Protestant household where she is employed as a Lady’s companion who is also a patron of the French Canadian Missionary Society. As Sadlier’s protagonist observes:

There was one thing that tended not a little to my increasing dejection. It so happened that Lady’s house was situated in *St. Antoine* street, a fashionable suburb, consisting for the most part of handsome and elegant private dwellings; a very pleasant locality it was,—but in it was situated the Catholic

Cemetery for the whole parish, and many a sight of sorrow daily passed under our windows that persons in other quarters of the city did not see. Now the two great component parts of the Catholic population of Montreal are the French Canadians and the Irish, the latter swelled from year to year by the arrival of new emigrants. [...] I had no great difficulty in distinguishing to which of the two races they belonged. Funerals in general were pretty well attended, but occasionally they furnished pictures of such utter loneliness that it made my heart ache to see them, especially as I all along noticed that the loneliest and most affecting were of the emigrant class—mournful fragments of what has been called the Irish Exodus.³⁶

In reality, Mary Anne Sadlier and her husband James lived in this “very pleasant locality” at 14 St. Antoine in 1854, “where many a sight of sorrow daily passed” in their vicinity.³⁷ Like her protagonist, Sadlier herself would seem to have held vigil observing these “lonely” and “affecting” emigrant funerals. It is important to emphasize that the “mournful fragments” of the “Irish Exodus” she lamented were not the Famine dead in the city’s fever sheds in 1847–1848, but rather their surviving family members and later emigrant arrivals buried in St Antoine Catholic cemetery that closed in 1855. Her imagined topography of migrant mortality did not yet extend to the sheds.

Nevertheless, Elinor Preston does describe in meticulous detail emigrant funeral processions to emphasize the extreme vulnerability of the city’s Irish community. She recounts that

I have seen the wife, with one or more children, walking close behind the poor-hearse, perhaps the hood of a once decent blue cloak drawn up over the woman’s head, as it were to screen her anguish from the observation of the cold, mocking stranger. Once or twice I saw a little family of emigrant children following the corpse of a father or mother—the elder leading the younger by the hand, and occasionally checking by a reproachful look or gesture the childish curiosity of the little ones, who, happily unconscious of their desolate state, would fain have a look at the fine houses on either hand. [...] Many and many a corpse I saw borne to the grave during my stay in that neighborhood, without one human being to shed a tear or breathe a prayer over the departed. [...] How often did the sympathetic sigh escape me, as I wished from my inmost heart that they had never left their own green isle.³⁸

The sheer repetition in these “funeral scenes” of emigrant abjection reinforces the impression of impoverished Irish individuals and families appearing incongruous below such “fine houses” and destined only for an early grave. Yet for even the most desolate, there is never any question that their remains will be protected “from the observation of the cold, mocking stranger” or deprived of a Catholic funeral. Their passing is marked by Elinor Preston’s “sympathetic sigh” expressed in silent vigil before they are received by Catholic clergy and laid to eternal rest. Indeed, the protagonist herself ultimately summons to memory the departed members of her family and finds solace in a distant French-Canadian village churchyard longing only for “the world beyond the grave.”³⁹ Narrative closure requires the repeated observance of “Christian burial”⁴⁰ rituals that spare any indignity to the dead.

Thus, Mary Anne Sadlier remained vigilant against any threat to the dignity of her coreligionists. Yet for all of her emphasis on emigrant resilience, she was also oblivious to the most compelling and poignant accounts of their historical experience. Indeed, the most powerful stories of the Irish Famine migration were never captured in novels but rather unpublished French language annals that only became accessible to the city’s Irish community at the turn of the twentieth century, including in the form of translated annals by Sadlier’s daughter, Anna T. Sadlier.⁴¹ This is all the more remarkable because several of these historical accounts emanated from St. Patrick’s Orphan Asylum, an institution that was established in 1851 and incorporated in 1855 when Sadlier’s husband James was appointed one of its charter trustees.⁴² As noted elsewhere, the Grey Nuns’ French language annual “The Foundation of St. Patrick’s Asylum” features the seemingly miraculous account of Galway widow Suzanne Brown who was separated in the fever sheds from her young children George, Bridget, and Rose in March of 1848, only to be reunited with her youngest daughter over a year later in St. Patrick’s Church.⁴³ It is at once a devotional tale and a historically verifiable record of Famine Irish separation and reunification.⁴⁴ At the same time that the “female orphans” Bridget and Rose Brown were living in the Grey Nunnery,⁴⁵ Sadlier set part of her novel *Alice Riordan, the Blindman’s Daughter: A Tale for the Young* (1851) therein. Yet the actual historical figure of Rose Brown provides a much more compelling role model for Irish Catholic youth than Sadlier’s fictional character. The fact that she remained oblivious to these devotional tales originating in the very institutions that she chose as

fictional settings attests to her social distance from French-Canadians whom she nevertheless admired.

More broadly, Mary Anne Sadlier’s fiction in the 1850s was both shaped by and helped reinforce the gradual religious and racial realignment between Irish Catholics and French-Canadians from political compatriots to devout co-religionists against the common threat of evangelical Protestantism,⁴⁶ which also incited her growing animosity towards African-Americans that Catherine Eagan explores in this volume. Peter O’Neill argues persuasively that it was not until Sadlier left Montreal for New York and published *Bessy Conway* in 1861 “that Irish racial superiority over the Black person is explored in any sustained fashion” in her work. “Religion rather than race was the main concern of Famine generation writers.” In *Bessy Conway*, Sadlier “staked a claim for Irish membership in white America by denigrating African Americans.”⁴⁷ Shortly after the publication of *Bessy Conway*, Elizabeth Hely Walshe offered a more positive if highly condescending appraisal of African Americans in *Cedar Creek* that “fugitive slaves are found all over Canada as servants, and generally prove trustworthy and valuable”.⁴⁸ Unlike African Americans, French-Canadians were regarded by both authors as surrogates for Irish Catholics who were conversely attracted and repelled by their ostensible “natural” lack of sophistication or “supineness”. By the end of the 1850s, Sadlier had drawn extensively on her surroundings in “Catholic Canada”⁴⁹ and second-hand recollections of the Great Hunger in her fictional works, yet had never written about her own eyewitness impressions of the Famine migration in 1847.

“THE MEANING OF THIS MONUMENT”

The installation of the Black Rock Famine memorial in 1859 paradoxically marked the nadir of Mary Anne Sadlier’s and Irish Catholic communal recollections of Montreal’s Famine influx. The deliberate exclusion of Catholic clergy by the Protestant hierarchy from its dedication ceremony was completely antithetical to Sadlier’s literary and religious sensibilities. The fact that the vast majority of Irish fever victims the monument commemorated were Roman Catholic was not acknowledged. The “Herculean business” of its installation was reported in detail on 3 December 1859 in the *Montreal Gazette*, the newspaper most closely associated with the city’s British Protestant elite.⁵⁰ Decades later, Thomas George Fennell, a labourer on the Victorian Bridge, recalled the Protestant tenor of the

ceremony. “The stone for the monument was taken out of a field a few hundred yards from the plot where it now stands,” he recounted. “It was dedicated by a Bishop of the Church of England. He was looking on at the ceremony from the window of one of the sheds.”⁵¹ In fact, the dedication was presided over by the Anglican Lord Bishop of Montreal, Francis Fulford, the Rev. Jacob Ellegood, and the Rev. Canon Leach in turn. Unlike the bishop, the latter two clergymen had served in the fever sheds in 1847.⁵² “I have seen upwards of 1800 persons of both sexes and all ages lying at the same moment, smitten down with that dreadful malady,” declared Leach.

Of the great multitude that died and were buried here there must be many surviving relatives or friends, and of these, if our proceedings to-day should happen to come to their knowledge, there may be some who, even now, may be happy to learn, that for the deceased everything was done which, under the circumstances, was possible, everything that human care and the offices of religion could do; and also it may be gratifying to learn that this durable monument has been erected to preserve from desecration the spot where they sleep.⁵³

Leach’s remarks appear disingenuous and an implicit acknowledgement that the vast majority of Irish Catholic “surviving relatives or friends” were not in attendance because their clergy had not been invited. His contention that “for the deceased everything was done which … the offices of religion could do” would appear a tacit admission that their emigrant dead were consigned to unconsecrated ground, left bereft of catholic liturgical burial rituals such as the sprinkling of holy water. Leach concluded with the affirmation that “future generations … shall regard with respect the meaning of this monument.” It was precisely its implication of Protestant ascendancy that deprived Mary Anne Sadlier and Montreal’s Irish Catholic community of the cultural memory of their Famine dead. They became inert objects of remembrance in the decade after 1847.

Their reclamation of the emigrant dead as “figures of memory”⁵⁴ began in the 1860s after the Sadliers had departed for New York. Prominent visitors to the monument gradually sought to redefine its meaning as a site of Catholic pilgrimage. As such, it provides a case study of the contestation of cultural memory, the reconfiguration of devotional practices, liturgical rites, public rituals, and religious observances associated with the memorial through which its communal significance was mediated and defined.

As Ann Rigney argues, cultural memory “is constituted in the very act of reiteration. [...] Without reiteration it becomes inert.” “The social energy driving this activity is arguably generated,” she adds, “as much by dissensus as by consensus, with the desire to assert something in face of its possible denial an important motivator behind acts of remembrance.”⁵⁵ Irish Catholic pilgrimages and later processions to the Black Rock reiterated their communal claim to the commemorative site and asserted their presence in each of these acts of remembrance which had been denied at its installation.

The first pilgrimage to the Black Rock was performed in November 1866 by John Francis Maguire, the editor of the *Cork Examiner* and author of *The Irish in America* (1868). As argued elsewhere, he provided the most important conduit for the creation and transmission of Famine memory between Ireland and Quebec.⁵⁶ He attested that:

The orphan children were gathered to the homes and hearts of the generous Canadians and loving Irish; and most of them had grown to manhood or womanhood before either monument or epitaph had marked the spot in which the bones of their dead parents were mingling with the dust. But there is a monument and a record [...] within a hundred yards or so of the Victoria Bridge, that wondrous structure which spans the St. Lawrence [...] a huge boulder, taken from the bed of the river, and placed on a roughly hewn stone [...] In its terrible significance, the rude monument by that mighty river's side is far more impressive.⁵⁷

Maguire equated “the terrible significance” of the Black Rock memorial with Irish cultural memories of French-Canadian generosity in adopting orphan children whose parents had no other “monument or epitaph” to mark their loss, rather than the acrimonious circumstances of its installation. Four years later, the Reverend M.B. Buckley from Cork made a similar pilgrimage “to the spot where so many of my fellow-countrymen so miserably perished. There was the desolate spot,” he observed, “an enormous stone placed on a pedestal—a huge boulder from the bed of the St. Lawrence—commemorating the tragic circumstance, with words somewhat as follow:—‘Here lie the remains of 6000 immigrants [why did they not say Irish?] who perished of famine in 1847.’”⁵⁸ Buckley’s question about why the monument’s epitaph did not specifically acknowledge his “fellow-countrymen” who “so miserably perished” resonated with the city’s Irish Catholic community.⁵⁹ Their individual pilgrimages were

followed from the mid-1880s by communal processions and a solemn requiem mass, led by newly arrived Belgian Redemptorist Fathers in nearby St Ann's church, who thereby ingratiated themselves with their Irish-Canadian parishioners.⁶⁰ Such religious observances "for the repose of the souls of the thousands of victims of the ship fever of 1847"⁶¹ became a tradition of reclaiming the Black Rock as an Irish Catholic memorial. Ultimately, Mary Anne Sadlier was inspired to do the same.

"THEIR PLACE OF SEPULTURE"

Mary Anne Sadlier finally shared her memories of the Irish Famine migration to Montreal in her article "The Plague of 1847," published in the newly established Jesuit *Messenger of the Sacred Heart* in June of 1891, several years after she had returned to the city from New York. Her purpose was to pay tribute to the French-Canadian and Irish Catholic bishops, clergy, and female religious caregivers of the Famine emigrants and provide reassurance that they "did all that was possible to alleviate the sufferings of the poor victims while yet alive, and to give them Christian burial when death ended their misery."⁶² Sadlier reiterated her concern in the article as in her novels about the importance of dignified Catholic burial. She recollected in detail the final sermon of Father John Jackson Richards—a Methodist proselytizer turned Catholic convert who founded the city's Irish Catholic community in 1817—which was a requiem for the Famine dead. She recalled him as:

One of the priests who fell victim to the ocean-fever, an early convert from Methodism, [who] preached in St Patrick's Church one Sunday when the plague was at its worst. An aged man, with long gray hair, and calm, earnest face, he spoke with touching fervor of the sufferings and death of the faithful children of Ireland, the tears rolling down his cheeks as he spoke. He told of the faith, the piety, the resignation with which they suffered and died. "O my brethren!" he said, "grieve not for them; they did but pass from earth to the glory of heaven. It is true, they were cast into the earth in heaps, their place of sepulture marked by no name or epitaph, but I tell you, my dearly beloved-brethren, that from their ashes the faith will spring up along the St. Lawrence, for they died martyrs as they lived confessors of the faith."⁶³

Father Richards' requiem sermon for the Famine dead laid a solemn injunction on his congregation to remember them—and himself, shortly

thereafter—as martyrs and confessors of the faith. Their “place of sepulture marked by no name or epitaph” would be hallowed in the sacred memory of their surviving brethren and coreligionists. Although “they were cast into the earth in heaps” along the banks of the St. Lawrence, their solemn remembrance would seed future faith. There can be little doubt that Irish Catholics who beheld Father Richards’ final sermon and witnessed the suffering of Famine emigrants, like Mary Anne Sadlier, felt utterly betrayed by the actual epitaph inscribed on the Black Rock at its Protestant dedication ceremony in 1859. It was a complete repudiation of their faith. Indeed, they suffered “the crowning torture” of “being consigned to unhallowed earth.”⁶⁴

Sadlier reflected on the meaning of the monument and its commemorative significance as the Famine dead were passing from living into ancestral recollection or what Assmann terms communicative into cultural memory.⁶⁵ She laid claim to them from the vantage point of an eyewitness to their fate. She also sought to place on record the monument’s commemorative emphasis on French-Canadian generosity rather than its failure to acknowledge the thousands of confessors and martyrs of the faith that lay beneath. In her own words:

Two generations have come and are well nigh gone, and the memory of that time is now waxing dim. But to those yet lingering who witnessed its miseries, its horrors, it is still fresh and vivid. [...] Two only I would fain to place here on record: the tender charity wherewith the French-Canadian people, dwelling on the shores of St. Lawrence, at the suggestion of the beloved pastors, adopted the thousands of poor orphans left in their midst by the terrible ocean-plague, receiving them as gifts from Heaven, and cherishing them as their own flesh and blood, thus bringing them up in the faith of their martyred fathers—an act of charity never to be forgotten. The other fact worthy of note is the rude but substantial monument erected at Point St. Charles over the graves of *six thousand* half forgotten victims of the plague, by the workmen employed on the construction of the great Victoria Bridge. Surely such facts go far to redeem the character of our fallen race from the charge of selfishness and cold indifference to the woes and wants of others.⁶⁶

Sadlier’s emphasis on the commemorative significance of the Black Rock as a marker of “*six thousand* half forgotten victims” as well as French-Canadian “tender charity” in adopting Irish orphans supplanted its earlier Protestant resonances as the predominant cultural memory of the Famine migration.

This predominant cultural memory was amplified at the Golden Jubilee or the fiftieth anniversary of the Famine influx in 1897 when the monument's redemptive attributes were also disputed. Colin McMahon notes that the jubilee event "took place on a scale 'never before seen in the history of the Irish Catholics of Montreal,' bringing 20,000 Montrealers to the 1847 burial grounds, 5000 of whom walked from St. Ann's church in procession on a route festooned with bunting and banners." As in Sadlier's article, most of the assembled delegates "enjoined Irish Montrealers to preserve the memory of the Famine Irish and draw inspiration from their courage and that of the French-Canadians who came to their aid and took in orphans."⁶⁷ One of the most poignant expressions of Irish gratitude came from Father George Brown, a Famine orphan himself, who had been separated from his mother Suzanne in the fever sheds in 1848. "Just 50 years ago I was at 'the sheds' myself, one of the sick emigrants", he recalled, "so many of whom had left Ireland, with heavy hearts, only to find a grave on the shore of the St. Lawrence." "I am a living witness," he added, "and proof of the affectionate care and help tendered on that occasion by the French Canadians, both clergy and people. If there were no other bond of union and friendship between Canadians and French of Irish descent, the remembrance of those days ought to be sufficient to unite them forever."⁶⁸ George Brown personified "this bond of union and friendship between Canadians and French of Irish descent" as a "living witness" and embodied "remembrance" of the generosity of his French-Canadian benefactors that Sadlier sought belatedly to "place ... on record". He gave expression to a definitive historical experience that had eluded her in her fiction. In addition to the repeated acknowledgements at the jubilee of French-Canadian charity, "some of the speeches also conveyed considerable disenchantment with the Famine site's stewardship and the stone marking the spot," which was variously described as "that primitive rock" and as a memorial "that came from strangers' hands [and was] in no sense an Irish monument."⁶⁹ More to the point, the Black Rock itself was under continuous threat of relocation from the burial ground by the Grand Trunk Railroad, which finally moved it several blocks away to facilitate expansion in 1900.

This prompted considerable community reaction, including the republication of Mary Anne Sadlier's article in the *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle* with a scathing postscript in defence of the monument. "The huge sepulchral monument at Pointe St. Charles tells its own story," she wrote:

It was placed over the graves of those thousands of Irish emigrants to preserve their remains and place of rest ‘from desecration!’ Surely a holy and a righteous object! It is for the Irish citizens of Montreal to see that it be carried out now and perpetuated hereafter.

Who shall dare to outrage the most sacred traditions, as well as the most tender affections of a whole people by converting the site of the fever sheds and the place of sepulture of the famine-victims of 1847, to any secular or commercial purpose whatever?⁷⁰

Sadlier’s elevation of “that rude but substantial monument” into “a holy and righteous object” marked her final acceptance of the Black Rock as a fitting memorial now under threat. The controversy surrounding its relocation and years of Irish Catholic reclamation had unlocked her memory of the Irish Famine migration that was inhibited by its initial Protestant associations. By the end of the nineteenth century, Sadlier lay claim to the monument and commemoration of the Famine dead as a “most sacred tradition”. In offering her own remembrance of them, she had come full circle.

CONCLUSION

Mary Anne Sadlier’s admonition to “the Irish citizens of Montreal” to respect the Famine dead and “holy and righteous” Black Rock memorial has yet to be fully heeded. McMahon notes that the monument was returned to the burial ground following “a protracted legal battle” in 1912—9 years after Sadlier’s death in 1903—where it once again became a site of communal procession which continues to this day, though for the most part it has languished on a neglected and little visited traffic median.⁷¹ As such, it has served as a fitting register of Sadlier’s waning and waxing memories of the Famine migration which were inhibited from its Protestant installation ceremony in 1859 until they were finally elicited following its reclamation by the city’s Irish Catholic community in the 1880s. In the decade after 1847, Sadlier had become one of the most prolific and renowned Irish North American novelists with repeated plotlines centred on Irish Catholic and French-Canadian perseverance against the threat of Protestant conversion and encroachment in Famine Ireland and Quebec. She regarded Montreal, where she resided, as the “chosen city of Mary” that was distinguished by its “public manifestations of Catholicity” and

ecclesiastical architecture. Yet she could not reconcile that large granite boulder within her literary and religious sensibility. At first, it seemed to signify a sense of Protestant preeminence that defined the outlook of authors such as Elizabeth Hely Walshe from which Irish Catholics recoiled. It became an inert object of Famine remembrance until more propitious circumstances arose for their recollection of the emigrant dead. The repeated reclamation of the Black Rock by the city's Irish Catholic community prompted Sadlier to recall these figures of memory in service of a more usable past. She also transfigured her remembrance of French-Canadians from stalwart coreligionists against the threat of conversion to benevolent parents adopting Famine orphans—"an act never to be forgotten by the Canadian Irish"⁷²—which she had appeared oblivious of in the 1840s. Paradoxically, Mary Anne Sadlier herself has been recognized as a National Historic Person by Parks Canada since 2007, while it rejected "the Black Rock as a National Historic Site in the 1990s" because it "lacked truly national historical significance."⁷³ More recently, "the Irish citizens of Montreal" would seem to have heeded Sadlier's call to perpetuate the memory of the Famine dead and preserve their "place of sepulture" by forming the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation. It has campaigned assiduously to create a more dignified memorial park around the Black Rock site as part of a multi-million dollar redevelopment of the area.⁷⁴ Near the end of her life, Sadlier recognized that "the huge sepulchral monument ... tells its own story." Its next chapter will hopefully restore to the Famine dead their dignity.

EXCERPT: MRS. JAMES SADLIER, "THE PLAGUE OF 1847",
MESSENGER OF THE SACRED HEART (MONTREAL: LEAGUE
 OF THE SACRED HEART, JUNE 1891), PP. 204–210

How the waves of Time wash away even the deepest footprints of past events—once such stern realities! Looking back into Ossian's dark brown years, we of the generation passing away see many things that would startle the world of to-day, so strange, so weird, so solemn, like the ghosts of the long-buried dead.

One of these, a mournful phase of Montreal's chequered story, arises now before me. I refer to the awful visitation of what was then called "ship fever," but more correctly named "the famine fever,"—first brought to

our Canadian shores from famine and plague-stricken Ireland in the dismal year of 1847 [...]

In Montreal [...] the whole city was in a glow of fervent charity for the plague-stricken exiles. Trade and commerce languished, business was more or less neglected, and a fall-like gloom rested on the city. In the fever sheds at Point St. Charles many hundreds of the sufferers were constantly being cared for, but alas! few they were who escaped with life from that dismal lazarus-house [...]

During all this time the religious sisterhoods of the city were at their arduous post, caring for the sick and preparing the dead for burial, amid the fetid air and heart sickening scenes of the fever-sheds. First came the Grey Nuns,⁷⁵ who gave themselves heart and soul to the fearful labors of the vast lazarus-house. But even their large community was soon exhausted, their many institutions of charity requiring so many at home. Thirty of these devoted ladies were seized with the fever, and of these, thirteen died [...]

Then the Sisters of Providence, also daughters of St. Vincent de Paul, took their places beside the coffin-like wooden beds of the fever patients in the sheds, working as such heroines of charity only can work. When these two large communities were found inadequate to take care of the ever-increasing multitude of the sick, a thing came to pass that struck the whole city with admiration. The cloistered Hospitallers of St. Joseph, whom the citizens of Montreal had never seen except behind the grating of their chapel or parlor, or in their own hospital wards, petitioned the Bishop to dispense them from their vows of life-long seclusion, that they might go to the aid of their dear sister communities in the pestilential atmosphere of the fever sheds.

The permission was freely given, and the strange sight was seen day by day in the streets of our ancient city, of the close carriage that conveyed the Sisters of the Hotel Dieu from their quiet old-time convent to the lazarus-house at Point St. Charles. People pointed it out to each other with solemn wonder, as the writer well remembers, and spoke with bated breath of the awful visitation that had brought the cloistered nuns from their convent into the outer world, in obedience to the call of charity!

We have in Montreal a large picture of the interior of the fever sheds, showing with painful reality the rows of plague-stricken patients with the clergy and religious in attendance on them. In the far background the good Bishop himself is seen in purple cassock, ministering to the sick. The picture was painted by order of Monseigneur Bourget,⁷⁶ in gratitude for

his recovery from the fever through the intercession of Notre Dame de Bon Secours. It hung for many years in her famous shrine, a touching memento of a time forever memorable in the annals of Montreal. It is now to be seen in the spacious sacristy of the Bon Secours Church.⁷⁷

One of the priests who fell victim to the ocean-fever, Rev. Father Richards,⁷⁸ of the order of St. Sulpice, an early convert from Methodism, preached in St. Patrick's Church one Sunday when the plague was at its worst. An aged man, with long gray hair, and calm, earnest face, he spoke with touching fervor of the sufferings and death of the faithful children of Ireland, the tears rolling down his cheeks as he spoke. He told of the faith, the piety, the resignation with which they suffered and died. "O my brethren!" he said, "grieve not for them; they did but pass from earth to the glory of heaven. It is true, they were cast into the earth in heaps, their place of sepulture marked by no name or epitaph, but I tell you, my dearly-beloved brethren, that from their ashes the faith will spring up along the St. Lawrence, for they died martyrs as they lived confessors of the faith."

A few days after and the holy old man was seized with the dread disease, and speedily succumbed to its deadly blight. A thrill of sorrow went through the entire city when the news of his death went abroad among the people.

Nigh half a century has passed away since that mournful episode of Canadian history threw its shadow on the shores of the St. Lawrence. Two generations have come and are well nigh gone, and the memory of that time is waxing dim. But to those yet lingering by the way who witnessed its miseries, its horrors, it is still fresh and vivid. Many incidents and details come up from those long past years, but must be passed over. Two only I would fain to place here on record: the tender charity wherewith the French-Canadian people, dwelling on the shores of the St. Lawrence, at the suggestion of their beloved pastors, adopted the thousands of poor orphans left in their midst by the terrible ocean-plague, receiving them as gifts from Heaven, and cherishing them as their own flesh and blood, thus bringing them up in the faith of their martyred fathers—an act of charity never to be forgotten. The other fact worthy of note is the rude but substantial monument erected at Point St. Charles over the graves of *six thousand* half forgotten victims of the plague by the workmen employed on the construction of the great Victoria Bridge. Surely such facts go far to redeem the character of our fallen race from the charge of selfishness and cold indifference to the woes and wants of others!

NOTES

1. Mrs. J. Sadlier 1891, "The Plague of 1847," *Messenger of the Sacred Heart* (Montreal: League of the Sacred Heart), 204–210, 210.
2. John Francis Maguire 1868, *The Irish in America* (New York: D. and J. Sadlier & Co.); also see Jason King 2012, "Remembering Famine Orphans: The Transmission of Famine Memory Between Ireland and Quebec" in Christian Noack, Lindsay Jannsen, and Vincent Comerford (eds) *Holodomor and Gorta Mór: Histories, Memories and Representations of Famine in Ukraine and Ireland* (London: Anthem Press), 115–144.
3. Sadlier, "The Plague of 1847", 201.
4. They were cared for by French-Canadian and Irish Catholic clergy and female religious, including the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns), Sisters of Providence, and cloistered Hospitallers of St. Joseph, as well as Protestant clergy. Eyewitness accounts of the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) and Sisters of Providence can be found at Jason King 2015, Irish Famine Archive, <https://faminearchive.nuigalway.ie/>, (hereafter Grey Nuns), (online), accessed 21 July 2022; also see Jason King 2014, "The Remembrance of Irish Famine Migrants in the Fever Sheds of Montreal," in Marguérite Corporaal, Christopher Cusack, Lindsay Janssen, and Ruud van den Beuken (eds) *Global Legacies of the Great Irish Famine: Transnational and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Brussels: Peter Lang), 245–266.
5. Sadlier, "The Plague of 1847," 208.
6. Robert W.S. Mackay 1847, *The Montreal Directory* (Montreal: Lovell and Gibson), 179.
7. Anon. 1866, "Colleges and Academies", *Sadlier's Catholic Almanac and Ordo For the Year of Our Lord 1866* (New York: D and J Sadlier & Co.), 32.
8. Mrs. J. Sadlier 1850, *Willy Burke; or the Irish Orphan in America* (Boston: Thomas P. Noonan), Sadlier 1851, *Alice Riordan, the Blind Man's Daughter* (Boston: Donahoe), Sadlier 1853, *New Lights; or, Life in Galway. A tale.* (New York: D. and J. Sadlier & Co.), Sadlier 1855, *The Blakes and Flanagan: A Tale Illustrative of Irish Life in the United States* (New York: D. and J. Sadlier & Co.), Sadlier 1861, *Elinor Preston; or, Scenes at Home and Abroad* (serialized in 1857). Also see Charles Fanning 1990, *The Irish Voice in America: Irish-American Fiction from the 1760s to the 1980s* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press), 120.
9. Elizabeth Hely Walshe 1863–1864, *Cedar Creek: From the Shanty to the Settlement. A Tale of Canadian Life* (London: The Religious Tract Society) and Walshe 1865, *Golden Hills: A Tale of the Irish Famine* (London: The Religious Tract Society).

10. Marguérite Corporaal notes that “Walshe’s novel suggests that Canada may offer a paradise regained: either as a place to which radical elements which unhinge Ireland’s pastoral harmony can be exiled or as a new eden which may provide the starving poor with a new chance of happiness and consequently unburden the landlords in the homeland.” Corporaal 2010, “From golden hills to sycamore trees: pastoral homelands and ethnic identity in Irish immigrant fiction, 1860–75,” *Irish Studies Review*, vol. 18, no. 3: 331–346, 334.
11. Sadlier, “The Plague of 1847,” 8. Italics in original text.
12. According to James Hodges 1860, “a small mound and a cross only marked the sacred spot” until “towards the close of the work, when the workmen were thinking of leaving Canada,... they determined to erect a monument on the spot. A large granite boulder, weighing some thirty tons, was selected, which was placed upon a pedestal some six feet high, and which it may be hoped to future generations will preserve the remains of the dead from desecration”, *Construction of the Great Victoria Bridge in Canada* (London: John Weale), 75–76.
13. Colin McMahon 2007, “Montreal’s Ship Fever Monument: An Irish Famine Memorial in the Making,” *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* vol. 33, no. 1: 48–60, 49. “The same edition of the *Montreal Witness*, a paper known for its anti-papist views, that reported on the dedication ceremony,” McMahon claims, “also featured an editorial chastising Roman Catholicism as ‘a sect which takes no care to conceal its treasonable designs,’” 49; also see anon. 1859, “The Monument to the Ship Fever Victims of 1847–8,” *Montreal Witness*, vol. xiv, (7 Dec.), 777. Indeed, the fact that the dedication ceremony was covered by the *Montreal Witness*—an evangelical newspaper established in 1846 by John Dougall, who also helped found the French Canadian Missionary Society in 1839 dedicated to their Protestant conversion—reinforced the impression that it was not a memorial site for Irish Catholics. Hence the city’s Irish Catholic newspapers such as the *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle* did not even acknowledge the ceremony. See J. G. Snell, “DOUGALL, JOHN,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 11, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–(online), accessed 24 July 2022, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/dougall_john_11E.html.
14. Jan Assmann 1995, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” *New German Critique*, vol. 65: 129.
15. In *An Irish Heart: How A Small Community Changed Canada* (Toronto: HarperCollins), Sharon Doyle Driedger (2010) notes that “an annual, unbroken tradition known as the ‘Walk to the Stone’” (221) commenced in the 1880s. It had its origins in a “special Requiem service for the repose of the souls of the Irish Catholic dead whose bones are there interred,”

anon. 1898, “The Ship Fever Monument,” *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle* (26 Nov.), 3.

16. Aileen Fyfe 2006, “A Short History of the Religious Tract Society”, in Dennis Butts, Pat Garrett (eds) *From the Dairyman’s Daughter to Worrals of the WAAF: the Religious Tract Society, Lutterworth Press and Children’s Literature* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press), 17.

17. Christopher Morash 1995, *Writing the Irish Famine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 93.

18. Marguérite Corporaal 2017, *Relocated Memories: The Great Famine in Irish and Diaspora Fiction, 1846–1870* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press), 145. The passages from *Golden Hills* are quoted from pages 64 and 224.

19. Walshe, *Golden Hills*, 224.

20. Walshe, *Cedar Creek*, 39.

21. Walshe, *Cedar Creek*, 64.

22. Walshe, *Cedar Creek*, 69.

23. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 223.

24. Mrs. J Sadlier 1853, “Superb Editions of Standard Catholic Works. Published by D. & J. Sadlier & Co,” 9, appended to *New Lights: or, Life in Galway. A Tale*.

25. Corporaal, *Relocated Memories*, 9.

26. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 226–227.

27. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 443.

28. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 264–265.

29. Anna T. Sadlier 1903, “Mrs Sadlier’s Early Life, Her Books and Friends,” *Donahoe’s Magazine*, vol. 49: 331.

30. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 220.

31. By contrast, the Wynn brothers in *Cedar Creek* are dismissive of this “vast but dreary Romish cathedral, which seats ten thousand people in its nine spacious aisles and seven chapels.” Walshe, *Cedar Creek*, 66.

32. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 223–224.

33. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 238.

34. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 120.

35. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 238.

36. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 238–239.

37. John Lovell 1854, *Montreal Directory, 1854* (Montreal: Blackmore), 243.

38. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 239–240.

39. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 289.

40. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 290.

41. See Jason King 2015, “French-Canadian and Irish Memories of the Famine Migration of 1847: Mary Anne Sadlier, Rosanna Leprohon, and French-Canadian Female Religious in Montreal,” in Christine Kinealy, Patrick

Fitzgerald, Gerard Moran (eds) *Irish Hunger & Emigration: Myth, Memory and Memorialization* (Hamden, Connecticut: Quinnipiac University Press), 95–106.

42. *Statutes of the Province of Canada, Part 2* 1885, (Quebec: Stewart Darbyshire and George Desbarats, Law Printer to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty), 993. James Sadlier “rendered signal service” until his departure from Montreal for New York and resignation on 30 May, 1861. J.J. Curran 1902, *Golden Jubilee of St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum. The Works of Father Dowd, O'Brien and Quinlivan with Biographies and Illustrations* (Montreal: Catholic Institute for Deaf Mutes), 21–21. It is a measure of increasing religious polarization that the contemporaneously published *The Emigrant Ship: A Tale, Written by a Lady for the Bazaar, in Aid of the Protestant Orphan Asylum* (Montreal: Lovell & Gibson) in 1850 makes no mention of the city's majority French-Canadian and Irish Catholic population that comprised the vast majority of Famine victims and orphans.

43. See Jason King 2021, “Montreal's Grey Nuns: The Great Hunger Migration and the Miracle of Rose's Marble,” in Christine Kinealy, Jason King, Gerard Moran (eds) *Heroes of Ireland's Great Hunger* (Cork: Cork University Press), 205–220.

44. In the years that followed, Suzanne Brown's son George (1837–1902) became a parish priest in Saint Hugues, Quebec, and Bridget (1840–1930) and Rose (1843–1865) continued to reside in the Grey Nunnery until the latter took the veil and joined the order as Sister St. Patrice. She passed away at the age of 23, lamented by her fellow Sisters as “truly... a little rose without thorns in her soft and pacific character, exhaling perfumes of a soft and solid piety.” Grey Nuns, *The Typhus of 1847*, translated by Philip O'Gorman, (online), accessed 22 Jul. 2022, <https://faminearchive.nuigalway.ie/docs/grey-nuns/TheTyphusof1847.pdf>, 108.

45. United Province of Canada, Canada East 1852, *Census of 1851–1852*, District 37, Montréal, Montréal General Hospital, 4, Marie Rose Brown and Bridget Brown, lines 10 and 24 (online), accessed 22 Jul. 2022, <https://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item/?app=Census1851&op=&img&id=c002324165>.

46. This argument about French-Canadian and Irish Catholic political and religious realignment after the Famine migration in Quebec is developed in Jason King 2010, “L'historiographie irlando-québécoise: Conflits et conciliations entre Canadiens français et Irlandais”, translated by Simon Jolivet, *Bulletin d'histoire politique du Québec*, vol. 18, no. 3: 13–36.

47. Peter O'Neill 2017, *Famine Irish and the American Racial State* (New York: Routledge), 91–92, 122. Before her departure from Montreal, Sadlier offered a more sympathetic portrayal in *Elinor Preston* of George

Preston’s would-be Catholic “sweet Creole bride... Elmira Mendez” who informs the protagonist of her brother’s death and seeks consolation from “God alone, and our common mother... [for] my more than sister” (252–253).

48. Walshe, *Cedar Creek*, 290
49. Sadlier, *Elinor Preston*, 171.
50. It noted that “an enormous stone, of an irregular conical shape, has been erected upon an elevated pedestal of massive stone work, as a monument to preserve from desecration the enclosed piece of ground around it.” “It will bear the following inscription,” the paper added: “*To preserve from desecration, / THE REMAINS OF 6000 IMMIGRANTS / Who Died From Ship Fever / In 1847 and 1848. / This Monument is erected by the / Workmen of Messrs. Peto, Brassey & Betts / Engaged in the construction of / THE VICTORIA BRIDGE, / A.D., 1859,*” anon. 1859, “The Monument to the Fever Victims of 1847–8,” *Montreal Gazette*, (3 Dec.), 1.
51. “Affidavit of Thomas George Fennell, 23 January, 1911.” Library and Archives Canada, RG46, vol. 52, vol. 119, file 13761, 189.
52. Decades later, Ellegood recalled seeing “a row of black faces... dying by the dozen, by the score. While I bent over to take a last message they died. While I held their hands they died.” Jacob Ellegood 1909, “Sixty Years of Progress in Montreal,” *Montreal Standard*, (13–20 Sept.).
53. Anon. 1859, “The Monument to the Fever Victims of 1847–8,” *Montreal Gazette*, (3 Dec.), 1.
54. Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” 129.
55. Ann Rigney 2018, “Remembrance as remaking: memories of the nation revisited”, *Nations and Nationalism* vol. 24, no. 2: 244.
56. See King, “Remembering Famine Orphans,” 115–144.
57. Maguire, *The Irish in America*, 148.
58. M.B. Buckley 1889, *Diary of a Tour in America. By M.B. Buckley, of Cork, Ireland. A Special Missionary in North America and Canada in 1870 and 1871* (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers & Walker), 64–65.
59. During his visit to Montreal, Buckley also met with “Mrs Sadlier, of New York” for whom he had a letter of introduction from John Francis Maguire. *Diary of a Tour*, 247, 23.
60. Driedger, *An Irish Heart*, 220–221.
61. Anon. 1890, “Brevities,” *Montreal Herald* (27 Jun.), 8.
62. Sadlier, “The Plague of 1847,” 204, 206.
63. Sadlier, “The Plague of 1847,” 209. Father Richards’ final sermon is also reproduced almost verbatim in John Francis Maguire’s *The Irish in America*, 147.
64. Sadlier, *Blakes and Flanagans*, 274.

65. Astrid Erll 2011, *Memory in Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 27–33.
66. Sadlier, “The Plague of 1847,” 209–210.
67. Colin McMahon 2014, “Recrimination and reconciliation: Great Famine memory in Liverpool and Montreal at the turn of the twentieth century,” *Atlantic Studies*, vol. 11, no. 3: 353–354.
68. Anon. 1897, “A Jubilee of Sorrow,” *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle* (22 Sept.), 1.
69. McMahon, “Recrimination and reconciliation,” 354.
70. Mrs. J. Sadlier 1900, “Something About Point St. Charles,” *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle* (24 Feb.), 4.
71. McMahon, “Recrimination and reconciliation,” 355. The Black Rock has inspired a number of community theatre productions. See Jason King 2016, “Staging Famine Irish Memories of Migration and National Performance in Ireland and Québec”, *CLCWeb Comparative Literature and Culture* vol. 18, no. 4; 1–8, (online), accessed 21 Jul. 2022, <https://docs.lib.psu.edu/clcweb/vol18/iss4/6/>.
72. Sadlier, “Something About Point St. Charles,” 4.
73. Anon. “Sadlier, Mary Anne National Historic Person” (online), accessed 21 Jul. 2022, https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfh/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=11994; Matthew Barlow 2017, *Griffintown: Identity and Memory in an Irish Diaspora Neighbourhood* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press), 224.
74. See King, “The Miracle of Rose’s Marble”, 215.
75. Eyewitness accounts of the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) and Sisters of Providence caring for Famine Irish emigrants in Montreal’s fever sheds can be found at Jason King (2015), Irish Famine Archive, <https://famine-archive.nuigalway.ie/>, accessed July 21 2022.
76. Ignace Bourget (1799–1885) was the Bishop of Montreal (1840–1876).
77. The painting is Théophile Hamel’s (1817–1870) *Le Typhus* (1847). See Jason King, “Mortuary Spectacles: The Genealogy of the Images of the Coffin Ships and Fever Sheds,” in Marguérite Corporaal, Oonagh Frawley, Emily Mark-FitzGerald, eds., *The Great Irish Famine: Visual and Material Cultures* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018), 88–109.
78. Father John Jackson Richards (1787–1847), also known as Jean Richard, was a Sulpician priest in Montreal who died caring for Irish emigrants on 23 July 1847. Originally from Alexandria, Virginia, he had come to Montreal as a Methodist minister in 1807 to proselytise, but instead converted to Catholicism, was ordained in 1838, and presided over the city’s first English language services for Irish Catholics in 1817.



CHAPTER 4

Irish Sentimentality and White Racial Projects in the Civil War Novels of Mary Anne Sadlier and Mary L. Meaney

Catherine M. Eagan

Though scholarship on the racial status of the Irish has moved beyond looking primarily at the racialized images of the Irish in cartoons, images of simianized Irish men, usually poor, Catholic laborers or nationalists, are still the default when speaking of Irish-American racial identity.¹ The result has been an underdeveloped understanding of gender-mediated perceptions of Irish-American racial identity and how women fought back against their racialization and expressed a racial identity that was distinct but aligned with Anglo whiteness. If the Irish men in cartoons are usually ridiculed and racialized when they dare to question their status, whether in the conflict of a riot or on the stage, racialization usually occurs for “Bridgets” in the domestic sphere. In illustrations for a chapter called “Contrasted Faces” in Samuel Wells’ *New Physiognomy* (1866), the representation of a stereotypical “Bridget McBruiser” alongside the famed

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English nurse Florence Nightingale telegraphs messages regarding the women's differing class and racial statuses to the viewer.² Wrapped in a shawl, looking haggard and possessing lines on her face that suggest she is dirty (or perhaps also that she has darker skin), Bridget has a face with a simian upper lip and snub nose, while Florence Nightingale, wearing a ruffled collar and jewelry and possessing pale skin that looks clean (suitable given her convictions regarding proper hygiene), has a high brow and Roman nose that signified civilization and racial superiority according to contemporary theories of phrenology and physiognomy.³ The choice of Florence Nightingale, England's pioneer nurse, and the last name chosen for this particular Bridget, "McBruiser," suggests that Irish women are not only violent, dirty, and primitive, but are also deficient as caregivers, which would suggest that they are not even women⁴ (see Fig. 4.1).

Certainly, the Irish domestic in Frederick Burr Opper's cartoon "The Irish Declaration of Independence That We Are All Familiar With" (1883) does not seem to be a woman, especially when contrasted with her rather delicate white mistress. Clearly, Opper's ability at this late date to rely on

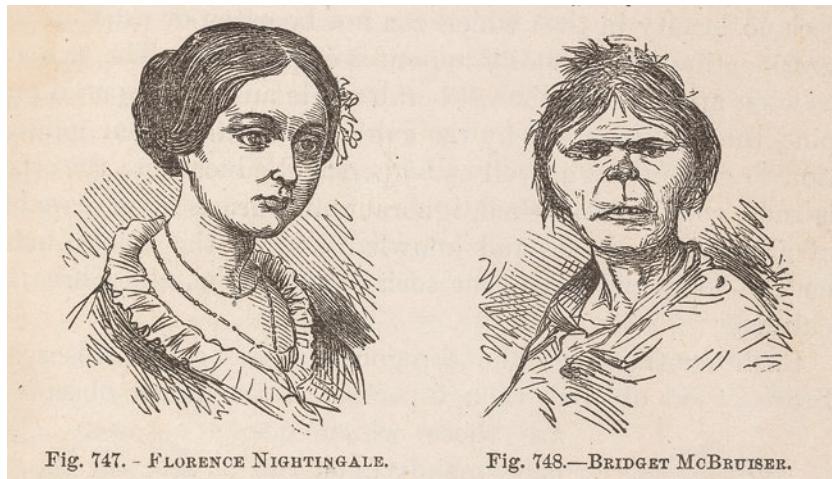


Fig. 4.1 Images of Florence Nightingale and Bridget McBruiser in "Contrasted Faces," *New Physiognomy; or, Signs of Character, Manifested through Temperament and External Forms and Especially in "The Human Face Divine,"* by Samuel Wells 1866, 537. (New York: Samuel R. Wells, 1875). Image courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society

an image of an Irish woman monstrosity for humor speaks to the staying power of racialized stereotypes, despite the progress Irish women and men had made towards assimilation by that time.⁵ In the cartoon, the mistress pleads with her recalcitrant servant. Meanwhile, the servant, a large, muscular woman with familiar ape-like features, clenches her fist and resists the mistress' interference, even as a plate is broken, something burns in the oven, and a pot boils over. The Irish domestic asserts control of her domain, but she clearly does not understand the rules of decorum required in a good American household, declaring her "independence" from them, and her appearance suggests that she could never acquire that understanding⁶ (see Fig. 4.2).

In a country that entrusted its mothers to raise patriots and its servants to become fellow citizens, these Irish domestics were not only represented as unsuitable for citizenship but also as threatening.⁷

Given the toxic and two-dimensional representation of Irish women in cartoons like these, novels written by Irish immigrant and Irish American women in the post-Famine period insist that Irish women not only understand the deportment and morals expected of American women but even embody it. Further, they suggest that Irish women, whether in Ireland or America, possess superior moral and racial strength, whether they be of high class standing or low, and whether in relation to African slaves or even Anglo-American women. To illustrate this, I will look closely at two Civil War-era novels written by women of Irish ancestry: Mary Anne [Madden] Sadlier's *Old and New; or, Taste versus Fashion* (1868) and Mary L. Meaney's *The Confessors of Connaught; or, The Tenants of a Lord Bishop* (1865). Sadlier's novel is a typical assimilation drama set in America, and Meaney's novel is dedicated to exposing the evils of English rule set in Ireland. On the one hand, I will show how these women assert and define Irish whiteness by using sentimental strategies to highlight typical tropes of whiteness like Europeanness, civilization, Christianity, and freedom⁸ as well as by making more direct comparisons of Irish white racial status to the contrasting, inferior status of slaves and savages. Certainly, the Irish women in their novels resemble Florence Nightingale and Opper's mistress of the house, not the primitive and obstreperous Bridgets that had such staying power. On the other hand, I will examine how both Meaney and Sadlier distance their characters from English and Anglo-American culture and more specifically from the Protestant models of womanhood expressed in American sentimental fiction, rejecting Protestant activism around the abolition of slavery, conversion to Protestantism, and public



Fig. 4.2 Opper, Frederick Burr 1883, "The Irish Declaration of Independence That We Are All Familiar With." *Puck* 13, no. 322 (18 May). Image courtesy of Library of Congress

education. They do so by stressing the importance of fidelity to their Catholic faith and Irish culture and, even, in Sadlier's case, by suggesting the racial inferiority of Anglo-American women. This strategy of highlighting Irish white racial belonging on the one hand and questioning the racial and moral strength of Anglo-American and English Protestants is not as contradictory as it seems: in fact, it allows Catholic Irishwomen to emerge as the true role models for white womanhood, whether in America or a yet-to-be-established nationalist Ireland.

SADLIER'S SENTIMENTALISM: IRISH CATHOLIC SUPERIORITY TO AFRICAN AND ANGLO AMERICANS

Mary Anne Madden was an immigrant from Cavan who lived in Canada initially, then moved to New York with her influential Catholic publisher-husband James Sadlier. Irish immigrant fiction writers were Catholic, but also educated, successful pillars of their community: priests, journalists, and publishers like the Sadlier brothers. While these Irish elites fiercely defended the bulk of their fellow immigrants, traumatized by famine and entry into an economy for which they were not prepared, they also recognized that their poverty and dysfunction did not bode well for their democratic or religious potential. This fueled their desire to "instruct" immigrants less fortunate than themselves, a goal that was in concert with the goals of sentimental fiction written by Protestants as well. Though Sadlier eschewed the writing of what she called "mere love-tales" in her preface to *The Blakes and the Flanagans* (1855),⁹ she deployed sentimentalism to reach readers who "will not read pious or devotional books,"¹⁰ and her plots and dialogue defended Irish Catholic culture even as they cleared a path for assimilation.

The racialized aspect of Sadlier's sentimentalism was likely not intentional, but it was present in the cultural discourse in which the novels participated. As Mary Louise Kete explains, "literary sentimentality is just the written trace of a broad cultural discourse that I call 'sentimental collaboration': the exchange of sympathy establishing the ground for participation in a common cultural or intellectual project."¹¹ That project, according to Kete, was to collaborate on an "imagin[ed] ... country" that would be defined by "shared, mutually felt emotional truths."¹² Even if these shared sympathies and truths were not explicitly called out as white, Raymond Williams' term "structure of feeling" suggests how middle-class, modern values constituted a shared "emotional" experience of whiteness despite various cultural differences. For example, Marjorie Howes describes how Sadlier pursued modernity even as she celebrated traditional Irish Catholic values of "the community and extended family" in contrast to American Protestant individualism.¹³ This conflict was managed by sentimental and sympathetic portrayals of Irish Catholics who modeled conservative American social and religious values and white racial strength, as seen in references to Irish civilization and European physiognomy. Indeed, David Callon claims that the 1854 article entitled "Native Americanism," written by the influential editor and Catholic convert

Orestes Brownson, “unite[d] racialist and religious discourse to suggest that consensus emerges from a willingness and ability of Catholics in America to ‘become assimilated in general character to the Anglo-American race.’”¹⁴ Brownson believed that the success of the Irish assimilationist project relied on the avoidance of the kind of angry tone that might provoke “a war of races” between Saxon and Celt.¹⁵

This “racialist and religious discourse” can be seen in *Old and New*; Sadlier portrays the Irish as possessing a white cultural essence that would comport with what Peter O’Neill calls “cultural acceptance as American nationals”¹⁶ even as she warns her readers against abandoning the Irish culture and religion in pursuit of assimilation. Only hardship comes to those who do so. The bulk of the novel focuses on two families, the Fogartys and the Gallaghers, who are making their way in America and dealing with the pressures of climbing the social ladder. The Gallagher girls are particularly foolish, turning away good marriage prospects if they have names with “a Mac or an O.” Mr. Gallagher, struggling with his social-climbing wife and daughters, complains to his friend Mr. Fogarty of “the notion they have that everything Irish is low and vulgar [...] and nothing’s right, or nobody’s worth knowing, that isn’t rale American, or doesn’t look American-like.”¹⁷ Fogarty confirms this problem, saying that “it’s the fashion here in New York, you see, for ladies to turn up their noses at everything *Irish*.¹⁸ Mrs. Von Wiegel serves as an exemplar of what white, middle- or upper-class Irish Catholic society should really look like—she was married to a German American but retains a deep affiliation to Irish culture. Her home, inherited from her deceased husband, is notably not furnished according to fashion, even as it reflects the owner’s “refined taste and ample means.”¹⁹ The Fogarty girls do learn to pursue taste over fashion, and it is ultimately made clear that they can move into polite white society while loving their culture and marrying Irish Americans. These marriage plots were another aspect of sentimentalism that was racialized; as Nancy Armstrong has suggested, sentimental plots center on the matching of characters with their appropriate marriage partners, which served to preserve racial purity.²⁰ All Sadlier’s novels, even as they emphasize Irish particularity and superiority on the one hand, contain scenes designed to assert the solidarity and brotherhood of good-willed Protestants and Catholics.

The book’s references to slaves and free Blacks are a stark contrast to the racial brotherhood shared by Irish and Anglo-American Protestants and Catholics. The mention of slavery and abolitionism is unusual for

Sadlier. However, Toni Morrison's study of the American literary canon and race, *Playing in the Dark*, helps us understand the important function of these seemingly tangential moments in this novel. Morrison reminds us that the "Africanist presence" that infused American writers' work, whether in the form of "underscored omissions, startling contradictions, [or] heavily nuanced conflicts," was "crucial to their sense of Americanness."²¹ The timing of Sadlier's novel, published just after the Civil War, could have driven its references to slavery; the Irish had proven their loyalty as Union soldiers, and the 14th amendment, which established African-American citizenship rights, was being debated at this time. Irish Americans demanded equal rights to those of native-born citizens in public meetings and the media, citing their choice to become American citizens as showing what Christian Samito calls a "deeper appreciation of American republicanism than felt by the native born."²² This suggestion that the Irish were more American, and perhaps more white, than some native-born Americans finds its expression in a few scenes from *Old and New*.

In one scene, for example, guests at Mrs. Von Wiegel's party joke derisively about an advertisement for a lecture, to be given by "Hardman E. W. R. White, a colored gentleman, lately escaped from slavery in that State where to Susanna's dusky Troubadour was going "with his banjo on his knee."²³" This scene would seem to have come out of nowhere, but as Morrison recognizes, it is "crucial" to the Americanness of Sadlier's Irish American characters, readers, and author. The men at the party muse that the colored gentleman will speak on abolitionism, of course, and they joke that Americans will listen to any nonsense, they love lectures so much. Cruelly, the men note that White is lecturing "to raise funds to *educate himself*. Now on what do you suppose will this alphabetically-great individual hold forth for public enlightenment?" On abolition, of course.²⁴ The use of stage minstrel imagery to mock Black claims to equality stands out in a novel that resists stagey, racialized descriptions of Irish characters²⁴ and makes claims for Irish equality. It underlines the racial, cultural, and civilizational superiority that the Von Wiegel mother and daughter enjoy as Irish Americans who scoff at the destabilizing ideas that some Americans entertain.

Irish women in particular are shown to be racially superior in the novel excerpt selected to accompany this chapter. Mrs. Von Wiegel represents a model of upper-class deportment; a morally high-minded woman; an educated woman interested in Irish antiquities who encourages her daughter

in this interest; a conservative Catholic convinced of her religion's superiority; a defender of its expectation that women confine themselves to the domestic sphere; and a specimen of racial superiority, whether compared to slaves or suffragists.²⁵ She is at home with her daughter Bertha and her servant Jan (notably, a German and not an Irish servant) when they are visited by two sets of petitioners, each set allowing Sadlier to use Catholicism and her superior grace and deportment as proxies for Irish racial superiority. The first set of petitioners are two women raising money for their mission, which seeks to feed, house, and convert the poor Irish children in their ward. The ladies' recounting of an argument with one of the "low Irish" mothers who is beyond help allows Sadlier to emphasize Catholicism's superiority. The Irishwoman's "wicked words" were her insistence that one did not need to read the Bible to get to Heaven and that Lucifer was the first Protestant. She also calls out the Protestant charity workers as hypocrites who should be "at home darning our stockings [instead of] trying to inveigle poor children from their lawful parents."²⁶ In a final insult, the Irishwoman called the Mission a "soul-trap."²⁷ The reader is meant to appreciate the superior wisdom of the Irishwoman who is earlier characterized by "idleness, drunkenness, blasphemy [...] wickedness [...] and perversity," in the words of the Mission school petitioners.²⁸ Later, Mrs. Von Wiegel rebuffs two suffragist petitioners who come to her door. Just before this second visit, she and her daughter discuss a recent discovery of medieval armlets, brooches, and fibulae²⁹—a not-so-subtle reference to the superior and ancient civilization of the Irish. Not only does this mother–daughter discussion of Irish antiquities align Irish culture with classical culture, in a home decorated with pieces from Etruria and Pompeii,³⁰ but it shows their education and interest in intellectual pursuits over the social climbing of the Fogarty girls or the social activism of these petitioners. After listening to the descriptions of women's oppression offered by this second set of petitioners, Mrs. Von Wiegel states with "freezing civility" that she has no desire to attend their upcoming lecture, "Woman's Rights, Spiritualism and Negro Slavery."³¹ Notably, she has just as little time for their suffragism as she does for their abolitionism. She dresses down the Reverend Julietta Fireproof, B.A., Bachelor of Arts, and Dorothea Mary Wolstoncroft Brown, refuses to sign their petition, and says with "marked emphasis": "I belong to a church that teaches unlimited submission to the Divine Word, and holds with St. Paul that women should obey their husbands, and, moreover, keep silent in public

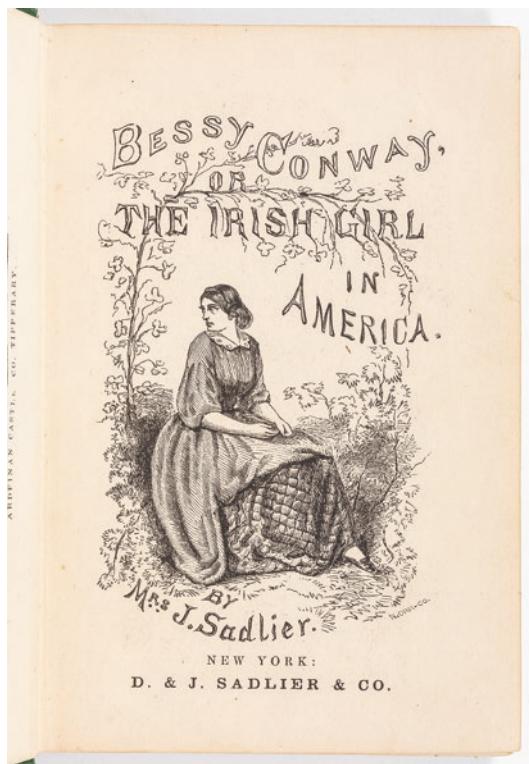
assemblies. I see no injustice, therefore, or oppression, in the custom which consigns us women to the shades of domestic life.”³²

This rejection of the morals of supposedly morally superior mission women and suffragists would have appealed in some ways to mainstream American values surrounding deportment and the proper role of women, even as they also made claims for the superior morals of the Catholic Church and the glories of ancient Irish civilization. The sentimental structure of Sadlier’s novel sells these claims with characters like Mrs. Von Wiegel and Bertha, whose superior breeding, behavior, and education mirror the sensibilities of Protestant sentimental fiction. Scenes like these are crafted to uplift Irish readers even as they manage Protestant fears that circulated around the large numbers of poor Famine refugees that had been coming to America for two decades and reject the radical agendas of some Protestant women. As Callon notes and Orestes Brownson sometimes missed, assimilation was the goal even as Irish culture is praised and Anglo hypocrisy is criticized;³³ the novel prepares its Irish-American readers but also any Protestant readers for Irish women’s assimilation into the American nation, despite their fears of the Bridgets in their midst. The Von Wiegels’ derision for the petitioners’ opposition to Negro slavery further confirms their eligibility for assimilation, as was the case in the earlier reference to Hardman E. W. R. White’s lecture.

Sadlier’s sentimentalism also confirms the white supremacy of the Irish when she implies that the petitioners are of lesser racial stock than Mrs. Von Wiegel. Both Protestant and Catholic sentimental writers in this time period were influenced by what Eamon Wright calls “anxieties of racial Otherness.”³⁴ Sadlier managed this anxiety by establishing a context in which Irish characters’ physical features confirm their white racial membership and then by providing contrasting descriptions of Anglo-Americans who do not meet those standards. For example, Mrs. Von Wiegel is described as having “venerable features,” a “high, pale forehead,” and a “sharp, aquiline nose,” all of which “denoted uncommon energy of character.”³⁵ The title page illustration for Sadlier’s earlier novel *Bessy Conway* (1861) features an Irishwoman portrayed in a similar vein, sitting within a shamrock border.³⁶ She possesses a pale white skin color and noble physiognomy, with a high forehead, Roman nose, and severe facial angle (Fig. 4.3), surely close to physiognomist Pieter Camper’s Greek ideal of ninety degrees.³⁷

Given this context, the descriptions of the suffragists who come to Mrs. Von Wiegel’s door do not compare favorably. When the petitioners are

Fig. 4.3 Title page illustration from *Bessy Conway; or, The Irish Girl in America*, by Mrs. J. Sadlier 1861, (New York: D. and J. Sadlier). Image courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society



shown in by the servant Jan, the narrator says that Bertha and her mother rise to greet “two nondescript animals attired in a fashion half masculine, half feminine, but rather inclining to the former.” Sadlier continues, “They were an oddly assorted pair of feminines, one being uncommonly tall with a dark face and a lowering brow, the other uncommonly short with a little withered, greyish-white visage and small ferret-eyes peering keenly from under the projecting leaf of her ‘gypsey flat.’”³⁸ Not only their unhealthy complexions, but also their animalistic appearance, calls their white racial strength into question. As Robert Nowatzki points out in his discussion of Frank J. Webb’s *The Garies and Their Friends* (1857), the white Garie is attacked by a mob for his marriage to a mulatto because to many pro-slavery whites, “white abolitionists surrendered their skin privilege and therefore became less ‘white’ because of their rejection of white

supremacy.”³⁹ Sadlier may harbor a similar conviction; three years later, after the Civil War has concluded, she distances her characters from abolitionists and allies herself with a whiteness defined not only in terms of breeding and behavior but also allegiance to the interests of whites over others, despite the fact that the Irish in New York fought for the Union. Sadlier intertwines the conservative domestic values of Irish women with racial superiority, stepping over the suffragists and abolitionists to link Irish and Catholic Americans to the whiteness of mainstream middle-class America.

MEANEY’S SENTIMENTALISM: COMPASSION FOR IRISH CATHOLIC “SLAVES”

Mary L. Meaney’s novel *The Confessors of Connaught; or, The Tenants of a Lord Bishop* (1865), published a few years earlier by Peter Cunningham in Philadelphia, also makes an argument for Irish whiteness by highlighting the components of a white structure of feeling that have been discussed so far, though the characters are peasants and not aspiring members of the middle class. At a time when Philadelphia’s Irish had just concluded their fight for the Union, the novel also makes a comparison of Irish “slaves” to Black slaves that establishes white Irish slaves as experiencing greater suffering. In addition, given the racial superiority of the Irish, the servitude and conversion that is expected of them by English landlords and Protestant ministers and teachers is presented to readers as a moral affront. Mary Meaney was born circa 1840,⁴⁰ and this was her second novel; her first, *Grace Morton; or, The Inheritance* (1864), was a religious tale of apostasy that ends by flipping the script, as was common—Protestants convert to Catholicism. This happens in *Confessors of Connaught* as well, but it shifts the story to Ireland; the novel is based on a true story from 1860 of tenants evicted by the Protestant bishop of Tuam because they would not send their children to his proselytizing school.⁴¹ It was written, as other novels had been, to call out the English for the Great Irish Famine and the proselytizing and forced attendance in the national schools that coincided with it. Like Sadlier’s *Old and New*, *Confessors of Connaught* deploys sentimentalism, pulling at the reader’s heartstrings with laudatory, emotional descriptions of Irish character and suffering, paired with didacticism, frequently providing prescriptions for maintaining one’s faith and explaining Catholic religious dogma. The interruptions for long-winded

sentimental and didactic passages slow the pace of the story, as they do in Sadlier's novels, and they similarly provide many opportunities to see Meaney's arguments for Irish religious and civilizational strength and how she connects this integrity to Irish white racial strength. Meaney has less of a focus on modernity and middle-class deportment than Sadlier, but the Irish peasant protagonists do inspire compassion based on qualities they share with Mrs. Von Wiegel: their forthrightness, respect for authority, love of family, loyalty to their community, and piety. Though Meaney differs from Sadlier in her use of the sentimental rhetoric of abolition to inspire sympathy for Irish "slave[s]" to British colonialism, she resembles the more famous author in her avoidance of any demonstration of compassion for African slaves that would suggest a common cause.

The positioning of the Irish as white slaves begins with objections to the English stereotyping of the Irish as savages. As suggested earlier by Eamon Wright, sentimental writers were influenced by anxieties of racial Otherness. For Irish writers in Ireland and perhaps especially Irish writers in America, these anxieties were exacerbated by a consciousness that the empire compared them to other "savages." The objection to such a comparison undercut Irish anti-colonial and abolitionist rhetoric, as Daniel O'Connell found when working with Irish Americans on the Repeal of the Union of Great Britain and Ireland. Still, Irish and Irish-American writers' use of sentimentalism was influenced by abolitionist literature, and by Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) in particular. One particular aspect of *Confessors* that recalls *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is Meaney's character Mrs. Emily Gilman, who is similar to Stowe's Ophelia Sinclair. Sinclair, an abolitionist in principle but a prejudiced Northerner in reality, is re-educated and ultimately puts aside her revulsion for Blacks to love Topsy. In a similar fashion, Mrs. Gillman, the wife of an English curate who travels to Ireland to convert Lord Bishop Woolcut's tenants to Protestantism, puts aside her revulsion for the Irish to love the Irish villagers she meets during her stay. Early on in the novel, Mrs. Gillman is concerned that she is emigrating to a country of savages because of what her friends have told her. The narrator tells us that Mrs. Gillman's friends frightened her by referring to terrible "instances of the wild, revengeful temper of the West," but she told herself that she "would not shrink from accompanying her husband whereverver [sic] he thought his duty called him, if it was even on a missionary expedition to the South Sea Islands." Notably, Mrs. Gillman's sister, Clara Hudson, reassured her that these "demi-savages [...] are not the cannibals of the South Sea."⁴² Mrs.

Gillman is somewhat embarrassed at her fears after this, but she then repeats rumors that “‘mothers ate their own children’” during the Famine, though she is not inclined to believe them.⁴³ The fact that the Irish do not turn out to be savages also provides a clear contrast between Mrs. Gillman’s and Ophelia Sinclair’s situations, in that Mrs. Gillman witnesses the nobility and sophistication of the Irish at every turn and is so impressed by the “‘simple, honest, good natured peasantry,’ so different from the savages—half civilized, but altogether lawless—whom her friends had described”⁴⁴ that she is on the road to conversion by the end of the novel. (Her curate husband and sister Clara, who has accompanied the couple to Ireland, have already converted due to their positive experience of Irish Catholic culture.)⁴⁵ By contrast, Stowe’s Topsy provides an example not of nobility and sophistication but its exact opposite: she is incorrigible and has no sense of family, Christian principles, or civilized behavior. Ophelia Sinclair eventually comes to appreciate Topsy’s humanity, but Topsy will convert to Miss Sinclair’s religion. There would be no question of Miss Sinclair’s converting to Topsy’s religion—she is clearly so rudimentary an example of a human being, with her “wicked drollery [...] guttural sounds [...and] cunning glances.”⁴⁶

These references to Irish savagery make it clear that the Protestant belief in Catholic inferiority, a belief initially held by the Reverend and Mrs. Gillman and Clara Hudson, is paired with a belief in Irish racial inferiority. Thus, the main purpose of *Confessors*, the establishment of the glories of the Catholic faith and the exposure of the horrific treatment of Irish Catholic peasants, is intimately related to novels like *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which seek to make a supposed racial inferior, a “thing,” into a “man.” Protestant proselytizing is such an insult because, as Eamon Wright also points out, “[t]he starting point of Conversion is an *a priori* assumption that those in need of the rightful religion have lower morals, that without the rightful religion they are in fact lesser beings. [...] Conversion is a racialized discourse in that it is predicated upon an ethnic chauvinism.”⁴⁷ Thus, as explained earlier, Christianity is a trope signifying whiteness because it is intimately connected to civilization, freedom, and in turn to European racial fitness. As Meaney’s Irish Catholic characters strive to maintain their faith under a Lord Bishop who is increasingly obsessed with their conversion at all costs, numerous illustrations of Irish piety, civility, and physical beauty support the original contention that the Irish are not savage as presumed. The Irish Catholic peasants end up converting a number of their Protestant “masters.”

Much of the novel focuses on the ways in which Mrs. Gillman's initial prejudices, whether focused on Irish savagery or Catholicism, are worn down by the evidence of Irish civilization and the Protestant depravity that she witnesses. In one scene, Mr. Gillman and Clara, who teaches in the Lord Bishop school, realize that the Irish race is just as strong as the Saxon, dispelling their earlier assumptions. While Clara sees the students as under-prepared compared to the students she has taught in England, she praises them for their intellectual quickness, curiosity, and eagerness to learn. Mr. Gillman joins in to praise the insight of Father Dillon's sermon at the Feast of the Assumption and to cite his congregation's appreciation of it.⁴⁸ When Mrs. Gilman is put off by her husband's and sister's excessive praise of the Irish, Mr. Gillman stresses that each race has its own unique gifts:

"Well," said Mrs. Gillman, laughing, yet a little piqued, "all that I can see is that you are both bent on making the Irish appear a superior race."

"Come, come, Emily, don't be so unreasonable. Has not each nation some peculiar characteristic? And why should we feel chagrin or vexation because Heaven has seen fit to endow the Irish with a warm fervor of fancy—a poetic temperament—above other people? ... Every day serves to make it more clear to my mind that, until these prevailing characteristics of the Irish are considerably modified, their conversion to Protestantism in large numbers is impossible."⁴⁹

Needless to say, the curate soon realizes that his proselytizing project is fruitless, and he is soon replaced.⁵⁰

Meaney also echoes Stowe in her deployment of sentimentalism to inspire compassion for Irish Catholics; however, this compassion leads to the Gillmans' conversion and suggests that the Irish are at least equals and are even superior to the English and Irish Protestants who oppress them. Lush descriptions of beautiful scenery, sunny children, and loving families are juxtaposed with heart-rending scenes of consumptive children, miserable hovels, evicted tenants, heartless gentry, and cruel bailiffs. Eamon Wright has also explained that "vocaliz[ing] 'compassion'" was a typical Protestant sentimental project in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,⁵¹ and Meaney's appropriation of this aspect of abolitionist rhetoric inspired sympathy for her Irish characters. Peasant characters in *Confessors* tell many sorrowful tales of the deaths and suffering of Catholics due to famine and evictions under Lord Woolcut and to ever more prejudiced, rigid curates, with tears being shed frequently. In one scene, for example,

when Mrs. Gillman's servant, Nancy, tells her of Lord Woolcut and Curate Miller's refusal to help the starving peasants unless they go to the school, Mrs. Gillman declares that she cannot believe how “any Christian man or woman [could] act so barbarously.”⁵² Nancy's story concludes with the death of Norry's husband and child, their burial in a Protestant graveyard, and Norry's own death from grief soon afterwards. Both Mrs. Gillman and Clara quietly weep as Nancy sobs at the recollection of the tragic story. Such discussions often rely for their appeal not only on death and suffering but on the impropriety of Protestant evangelism at these moments of suffering and on an appreciation for the Catholic faith. When Nancy concludes her sad tale by telling Mrs. Gillman and Clara that Catholics are comforted by the belief that their prayers can help the dead, Clara says that she wishes Protestants had kept this belief in their doctrine.⁵³ Later in the novel, the Irish have made such an impression on their visitors that Mrs. Gilman even insists that “Papists are at least *Christians*,” unlike a character named Roger Costello, a convert to Protestantism. She is horrified that he avoided his dying father's bedside and did not console his own mother because the “pagan” sacrament of last rites was being performed.⁵⁴ These tales move Mrs. Gillman further towards converting to Catholicism, clearly the superior religion.

As noted earlier, the physical beauty of the Irish Catholic characters, revealed in some of the character descriptions, supports the original contention that the Irish are not savage as presumed. Consistent with Wright's contention that the discourse of conversion is racialized, Meaney's narrator contests that racialization by emphasizing stereotypically white characteristics in the characters' physiognomy. When a brother and sister playfully tease each other, for example, the narrator tells us that “the fair Kathleen's face,” initially “rosy,” turned “crimson” with embarrassment.⁵⁵ Father Dillon is described at one point as having a “noble countenance glowing with patriotic fire—his eloquent eyes uplifted to that heaven in which he trusted for the redemption of his long-suffering country from a bondage the bitterness of which he knew full well.”⁵⁶ These delineations of pale skin and “noble countenance” recall the characteristics of superior physiognomy. Thus, these descriptive moments also highlight the dissonance of the poor treatment of the Irish given their white racial status.

The real suffering of the Lord Bishop's tenants begins after he removes the Gillmans and Miss Hudson from their posts. Compassion for the “enslavement” of the Irish gets only brief mention, but again, it contextualizes the suffering of the Irish, who have been proven not to be savages

yet are subjected to unjust treatment. A peasant mother and daughter have a difficult scene with a zealous parson who comes to encourage them to send their children to the school. The angry daughter, Judy, comments that they cannot make their rent, and a comparison of Black and Irish “slavery” ensues. She says:

“I’ve heard tell of parts of Ameriky where they can sell a negro slave to raise money, when all other means fail—bedad, like enough there’ll be an act of Parliament afore long giving landlords here the same power over their Irish slaves, as Andrew says.”

“‘Tis an awful system—that of American slavery!” began the parson, eagerly seizing the opportunity to dilate on a neutral subject.

“There’s never a doubt of it, sir,” chimed in the mother. “Troth, then, if it’s worse than Irish slavery it must be worse than the devil himself,” interposed the “irrepressible” Judy.⁵⁷

When evictions begin for those families who will not send their children to the schools, the desperation of the evicted tenants is so severe that even the sheriff cannot bear the injustice of it all, shedding tears. When a woman and her children pray to him for mercy on their knees, with hands raised, it recalls the well-known abolitionist image of the supplicant slave who asks, “Am I Not a Brother?”⁵⁸ Rather like Stowe’s Uncle Tom, who Clíona Ó Gallchoir suggests is a teacher,⁵⁹ these seemingly simple Irish peasants, described as slaves by Judy and her mother, teach Mrs. Gillman, Clara, and even the sheriff how true Christians should behave. Though Meaney is more concerned with objecting to the inhumanity of the Protestant Lord Bishop than with showing her readers how well-fitted the Irish would be to join the ranks of free white Americans, the references to immigration send the reader’s speculation in that direction.

As is the case in Sadlier’s *Old and New*, women in Meaney’s *Confessors* are at the center of upholding the faith, along with Father Dillon. The novel excerpt selected to accompany this chapter is an intensely sentimental one, placing Johanna Regan at the center of a drama that includes poverty, a consumptive child, children being manipulated by proselytizing teachers, and even the threat of kidnapping. Johanna’s superior moral principles win out, despite her naïve husband Barney, her child Bernard’s death, and their eviction.⁶⁰ Johanna fights hard against the school that threatens to convert her children even as her husband feels compelled to send their children there to keep their home. The teacher Mrs. Turner,

who has told parents Johanna and Barney Regan in the past that she wants to “bring up [their child Alley] as her own,” suggests that she keep the youngest Regan child, Alley, with her for the winter because the walk from home to the school in winter would be too arduous for the small child, and she would miss school.⁶¹ Johanna worries about Alley being converted, though, as Alley has told her mother that Mrs. Turner has her reciting Protestant prayers like “Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep” in place of “bad, ugly prayers” like the “Hail Mary.”⁶² Johanna bravely directs her older children to go collect her sister one holiday so that she can go to mass with her family instead of receiving religious instruction from Mrs. Turner. Johanna and Barney’s consumptive child Bernard, something like the angelic and wise Eva of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, praises his mother, saying, “Mother [...] I’ve been thinking how the hand of God is in all you do.”⁶³ In her dissertation work on Irish-American women writers and sentimentalism, Bridget Chapman argues that in Sadlier’s work, “Irish American women, through their association with the church, are more qualified to fulfill the duties of the proper middle-class woman [than Protestant American women].”⁶⁴ It is clear in Meaney’s work, too, that peasant women have higher principles than Protestant evangelicals (and often their husbands), and those Protestants with good hearts and clear thinking all convert by the end of the novel.

As Meaney only imagines an Irish nationalist future where Irish Catholics participate in government and attain a comfortable middle-class status, there is not as much tension in this novel between the rejection of Protestant women as models and the embrace of their modern, middle-class lifestyle. Since Sadlier’s novel is set squarely in the aspiring middle class in America, the tension is greater. Chapman explains, “Significantly, Sadlier’s female characters discredit the negative representations of Irish immigrant women and Catholic nuns only to reproduce the domestic ideal offered by the very culture whose negative images she contests and the literary women whose public roles she condemns.”⁶⁵ Certainly, for the “lace-curtain” readers who were the primary consumers of these tales, the reminders to remember one’s Irishness and cling to one’s Catholic faith did not call into question the core value of respectability. Still, I would differ with Chapman as to whether Sadlier’s characters simply “reproduce” Protestant domesticity.⁶⁶ Both Sadlier’s and Meaney’s novels underline the superiority of Irish whiteness by using sentimentalism and didacticism to drive home the European heritage, civilization, Christianity, and inherent freedom of Irish Catholics. These Civil War novels are

peopled with Irish characters who express pride in Irish history and homeland, model deportment, respectability, and generosity, and live as models of Catholic piety. Thus, when they lament their treatment at the hands of Protestant landlords, ministers, or charity workers, they demonstrate their superiority to Africans as well as Anglos. As Howes recognizes, “Sadlier’s fiction promoted the institutionalization of a middle-class Irish Catholic American community and culture, in order to enable new kinds of civic space and public life for Catholics, and to ward off the threat that the Famine immigrants might pose to these endeavors. She did this by promoting a new kind of popular, Christian, secular culture.”⁶⁷ I would say that this culture is portrayed as an ideal, not a reproduction.

CONCLUSION

Confessors of Connaught and *Old and New* show how Irish-American women writers played an important role in supporting Irish American white racial projects. Whether assimilationist drama or nationalist tale, these novels highlight the importance of resisting assimilation to Anglo culture and religion. For that reason, they are good examples of the ambivalence one sees in Irish-American fiction, which argues for Irish racial and religious separateness and integrity even as it makes a bid for Irish whiteness. At the same time, in presenting an alternative to Anglo models of womanhood, these Irish women yoke the conservative vocabulary of deportment, submission, and selflessness to the tropes of whiteness—Europeanness, civilization, Christianity, and freedom—to posit Irish womanhood as the ideal of whiteness. This is complemented, in these Civil War era novels that engage briefly with references to the institution of African slavery or actual enslaved and free Black characters, by refusing to make cross-racial gestures towards solidarity with the oppressed, the gauntlet thrown down by Daniel O’Connell over 20 years before. Sadlier and Meaney firmly managed any racial anxiety they may have felt about the British Empire and the transatlantic Protestant Church racializing the Irish as inferiors not only by maintaining a distinction between themselves and the pagan savages, uncivilized slaves, and free Blacks in America and the British Empire but also by positioning Catholic Irishwomen as role models for whites in both countries. The racialized nature of their sentimental strategy reminds those who create narratives protesting anti-Irish discrimination that a “white racial frame of reference”⁶⁸ can cast a pall over the most earnest stories.

EXTRACT 1: MRS J. SADLIER, *OLD AND NEW; OR TASTE VERSUS FASHION* (NEW YORK: P.J. KENEDY, 1903), 122–30.

“Are we, then, to understand that you refuse to subscribe?”

“I do refuse.”

“And on what grounds, pray?”

“On very simple grounds,” said Madam Von Wiegel rising with dignity, “because I am a Catholic.”

“You a Catholic! you, a German lady of high standing, and connected with a family so long and so honorably known here.”

“I am fain to hope that German ladies of higher standing than mine are good Catholics,” said the old lady with a half smile, “but as it happens, I am *not* German, though my husband *was*.”

“And pray what *are* you, then?” said Mrs. Bumford pertly.

“The question is rather impertinent,” said Madam Von Wiegel calmly, “but I will not refuse to answer it. I am a countrywoman of that controversial friend of yours who made so uncivilly free with your sectional origin, and I know not but you will set *me* down, too, as ‘a low Irishwoman,’ for I must own that I have no greater respect than she for religious *humbugs*, and pious kidnappers. Bertha, my dear! be so good as to touch the bell.”

Jan appeared on the instant.

“Show those ladies to the door, Jan!” said his mistress.

The ladies stood up, as erect and nearly as rigid as Lot’s wife after her transformation. The milk of human kindness—or rather the whey of philanthropy was turned to acrid yeast in the pulmonic region—vulgarily called *breast*—of the two zealous agents of the Fourth Ward Mission, and began so to ferment that an explosion was inevitable before they left the spot.

“Madam Von Wiegel!” began one, all panting with anger, “we are not surprised.”

“No, Mrs. Von Wiegel!” chorused the other, “we are *not* surprised at your unlady-like conduct now that we know what you are!”

“And we *might* have guessed it before, dear! from the way she cross-examined us—only for the respect due to the memory of that man there,” pointing to the portrait over the mantel-piece, “for I suppose that’s meant for Johannes Von Wiegel.”

“You are not mistaken,” said the lady of the mansion coldly.

“Well! only for *him* and all the other Von Wiegels that *were* a credit to the country and undoubted friends to the Protestant interest—we would have you exposed—as you deserve!”

This brought Bertha to her feet, cold, calm and stern. “Jan!” said she, “show those women to the door—at once!”

Jan stood holding the room-door open and motioning them out with an imperative shake of the head. There was no possibility of further resistance or further delay, so Mrs. Susanna L. Bumford swept grandly from the room, and after her, with a like majestic air, Mrs. Jedediah Hopington, consoling themselves as they traversed the hall with a pithy diatribe, in duetto, on the baneful effects of Popery.

“Well! my dear mother,” said Bertha when the door had closed after their visitors, “I knew you had a reasonable stock of patience, but I own you surprised me to-day. I could not have listened to their Pharisaical cant half the time.”

“Patience were little worth, Bertha! if it did not enable us to bear more than that.”

“True; but did it not make your blood boil to hear them describe in such a cool, business-way the nefarious means those people employ to promote the interests of Protestantism?”

“I must confess it did, my dear! but still it did not surprise me—I have seen enough of their manoeuvring in other countries to convince me that hatred of Catholicity is at the bottom of all their philanthropical associations—they may put what name they please on them severally, but that is the basis common to all.”

“Well! that is a new phase of New York society!—at least for me,” said Bertha, “but, by the bye, mother! when are you going to answer Aunt Helen’s letter? I have written to Eveleen this mornings and to Uncle Gerald, and I propose adding a postscript to yours when you write, in relation to that sepulchral cairn which has been recently discovered in their vicinity.”

“And the ancient brooch and armlets found therein.”

“Even so, mother! I am anxious to know whether the brooch corresponds with any of the *fibulae* described by Walker in his Treatise on the Dress of the Ancient Irish. The collection of specimens in the Dublin Museum is not as full as we could wish—some of the most curious have been bought up from private owners for foreign collections—sold to the highest bidder.”

“Two more ladies!” said Jan, opening the door with a broad grin on his broad face.

“Show them in, Jan!”

“I wonder what are *these* about,” said Bertha in an under tone, “perhaps Missionaries from some other ward.” She rose, as did her mother, on the entrance of two nondescript animals attired in a fashion half masculine, half feminine, but rather inclining to the former. Jan stood looking after them as they advanced into the room with an expression of bewildered curiosity that was amusing to see. From the rakish-looking hats that sat so jauntily on their [blank] to the Turkish trowsers and stout buskins ostentatiously displayed beneath skirts that Diana herself might have gone hunting in without fear of let or hindrance to her divine footsteps. Buokskin gloves, or rather gauntlets with deep leather cuffs attached, completed the costume.

“Mien goot Got!” ejaculated Jan as he left the room and hurried to the kitchen to tell Betty what a curious pair of visitors were in the parlor.

Madam Von Wiegel and her daughter bowed—the visitors bowed likewise, or rather nodded, and then they seated themselves with the air of persons who felt they had a *right* to be seated stand who would. They were an oddly assorted pair of feminines, one being uncommonly tall with a dark face and a lowering brow, the other uncommonly short with a little withered, greyish-white visage and small ferret-eyes peering keenly from under the projecting leaf of her “gypsey flat.”

It was clear that the ladies were of the Bloomer school, whatever else they might be, and it was just as clear that neither was on the sunny side of forty.

Madam Von Wiegel was about to ask in an ironical tone what fortunate circumstances had procured her the honor of their visit, when the tall lady opened her mouth—it was a good sized organ, too, and enunciated in loud, emphatic tones—meant probably for masculine—the following words:

“We are obtaining signatures, ladies, for a petition intended for presentation at the forthcoming session of the Legislature.”

Somewhat surprised, but too polite to show it, Madam Yon Wiegel asked very quietly

“To what does the petition relate?”

“To our *rights*, madam!” stamping her foot energetically on the carpet, “our trampled rights as women.”

“Oh indeed! and what particular *rights* are you claiming now at the hands of the Legislature?”

“The right of *speech*, madam!” said the tall Amazon with still increasing energy. “We claim a voice in the councils of the nation—the right to plead the cause of oppressed womanhood at the bar of the Senate, yea, and at the bar of justice—wherever man’s tyranny and injustice and all-grasping selfishness are to be grappled with, and subdoed. Men have kept us too long in a state of subjection for which Nature or Nature’s God never designed us. Eve was made free—the equal of Adam—”

“Pardon me, madam! I really was under the impression that Adam got dominion over Eve.”

“All a mistake, madam—all a mistake! That pleasant fiction was generated in the self-worshipping heart of man.”

“It has influenced all the inspired writers, then,” said Madam Von Wiegel, a smile playing round the corners of her mouth and twinkling in her dark eyes. From Genesis to the Apocalypse the Bible is full of it, and the great Doctor of the Gentiles.”

“A fig for your great Doctor of the Gentiles. Of course you mean Paul, whom nobody minds now-a-days.”

“It appears you do not, at all events,” put in Madam Von Wiegel.

“Certainly not,” said the tall champion of woman’s rights. I pretend to a small share of theological and Scriptural acumen myself, seeing that I studied Divinity under a godly professor, who was my father, moreover, according to the flesh, and graduated at one of our first New England colleges.”

She paused, evidently to give her hearers an opportunity of expressing their admiration.

Madam Von Wiegel bowed—Bertha bit her lip, and cast down her eyes very demurely but said nothing. The tall woman was taken aback—the little woman spoke in a little squeaking voice corresponding with her appearance.

“Perhaps we ought to have announced ourselves,” said she, “ladies, this is the Reverend Julietta Fireproof, B. A., Bachelor of Arts, and I,” she added, raising herself on her toes, in the vain endeavor to reach the height of her own importance, “I, ladies, am *Dorothea Mary Wolstoncroft Brown* of whom you may probably have heard!”

Madam Von Wiegel bowed again. She could not find in her heart to pull the stilts from under the little woman by telling her the plain unvarnished truth.

“Oh! of course, of course,” said the inflated little gas-bag, interpreting the bow according to her wishes—“my lectures on Physiology and Animal Magnetism and Bi-ology have excited no little attention. By the bye, ladies! I lecture to-morrow evening in Extravaganza Hall—allow me to present you with tickets for the course—subjects of great interest and importance, including Woman’s Rights, Spiritualism and Negro Slavery!”

“You are very kind,” said Madam Von Wiegel with freezing civility, “I have no doubt but we should be entertained and instructed were it in our power to attend your lectures, which, I regret to say, it is not.”

“Well, madam!” said the Reverend Miss Fireproof with a sidelong glance at her companion who had been engrossing much too large a share of the conversation for her liking, “well, madam! shall we have the honor of affixing your name to our petition?”

“Most assuredly not, madam!” said the stately Irish lady with marked emphasis; “I belong to a Church that teaches unlimited submission to the Divine Word, and holds with St. Paul that women should obey their husbands, and, moreover, keep silent in public assemblies. I see no injustice, therefore, or oppression, in the custom which consigns women to the shades of domestic life. I see in it rather a merciful dispensation for us, and a wise provision of the Divine Ruler for the wants of the human family.”

“A good morning, ladies!” said the Reverend female with exceeding stiffness and an elevation of her heavy brows, “I find we have been guilty of the folly reprobated by one of Old, namely, *throwing pearls before swine*. A good morning to you! Dorothea, let us hence quickly!”

The namesake of Mary Wolstoncroft elevated herself as near as she could to Miss Fireproof’s shoulder, and with a look of that belligerent kind commonly identified with *daggers*, she sidled out in the wake of her tall convoy, Jan honoring the pair with the same attention as before during their voyage to the door.

“Jan!” said his mistress, whilst Bertha threw herself on a sofa laughing immoderately, “Jan! mind we are not at home to any more of these visitors.”

EXTRACT 2: MARY L. MEANEY, *THE CONFESSORS OF CONNAUGHT; OR THE TENANTS OF A LORD BISHOP* (PHILADELPHIA: PETER F. CUNNINGHAM, 1865), 207–14.

The school exercises on New Year's Eve went off with great éclat. The Lord Bishop and his daughter were present, with a select party of visitors from "the palace;" the Doctor and the agent, with their respective families, together with other notabilities, graced the occasion; all lavish of compliments, protesting that the teachers had been remarkably successful this first year, and predicting that they would be still more so during the coming one.

Mick Regan, now appointed "paid monitor," was presented in due form by his teacher to the great people. He received from his lordship the comfortable assurance that "he had done very well indeed;" a few words of praise and a sovereign from some of the visitors; and from the Hon. Miss Woolcut a condescending smile, which, from so proud and beautiful a lady, should have been esteemed a guerdon worth toiling for, worth dying for. But Mick, with all the perversity of his race, scorned it as having no warmth or sincerity in it; and as he went back to his place, he recollects many of the triumphs he had obtained in the catechism class, when "Miss Margaret" with her own beaming smile, would say, "Well done, Mick; you'll make me quite proud of my success in teaching;" and thought his present success would seem worth something if she were there to reward him with one of her bright glances.

But she had not been invited to the opening; neither had Father Dillon, an omission which sadly perplexed those who had accepted as gospel truth all the curate's assurances of the *liberal and truly Catholic spirit* in which the schools were to be conducted. The omission seemed all the more surprising to those credulous individuals, inasmuch as clergymen of various denominations were present, from neighboring parishes. Several of these gentlemen made addresses, in which the zeal and liberality of the noble patron and patroness, and the ability of the devoted teachers were lauded to the skies; and promises were kindly given by the clerical speakers, that during the ensuing year they would deliver occasional lectures to the scholars on matters connected with their moral and religious instruction. This promise, which was quickly made known to all the inhabitants of Bartrymore, created not a little consternation among those deluded Catholics who had suffered themselves to be cajoled or frightened into sending their children to the Lord Bishop's school, in despite the repeated

warnings of their zealous pastor. They could now understand how they had been cunningly entrapped, and they had dismal forebodings of coming ill.

Johanna Regan's fears, always on the alert, were redoubled. Poor woman! It seemed as if she were destined never to be free from care and trouble; for this fresh burden of anxiety came just when she had begun to enjoy a little respite from want and sorrow. Bernard's illness had taken one of those favorable turns which mark the progress of consumption, awakening alike in the invalid and anxious friends hopes of final recovery. Mrs. Turner was very attentive to the sick boy; many little comforts had found the way from the parsonage to the poor cabin, and "the wolf," which had growled so threateningly at the door in the beginning of the winter, was no longer dreaded. Barney—"the head of the house"—basked in this little gleam of sunshine with all the complacent satisfaction of a lazy man. Small impression did his wife's fears of the proselytisers make on his mind; and he only began to reason on the matter when she besought him to commence the New Year by taking his children from the school.

"Easy, now, Johanna; never hollo till you're hurt. No harm's come to them yet through the school, and 'tisn't likely to. Mickey's a sensible boy: he knows his duty too well to be led astray by any bad teaching."

"It's not so much afraid for him I am, as for the others, Barney!"

"Aye, the others," and Barney took a long puff at his pipe. "Well, Pat 'ill be leaving there in the spring, and Susan would know in a minute if strange doctrines were preached to her, and Alley's no more'n a baby; no fear of *her*. We'll just let things rest as they are for a while anyhow, and get all we can out of them."

"But if they *do* try to turn any of them against their religion, Barney, will ye bring them home then?" persisted the mother.

"Why wouldn't I? Do ye think I have no care at all for their souls, woman, or have you enough of it for the pair of us?"

With this equivocal answer Johanna was forced to content herself; but she resolved to redouble her care for the children. The necessity for this vigilance was soon evident.

At the close of the school festival on New Year's Eve, Mrs. Turner detained little Alley, telling Mick that she intended to keep her as long as her mother could spare her, or, at least during the holidays; there would be no school until the following week, and the child would be such pleasant company for her during those few days, especially as her husband was to be absent on business. This arrangement was far from satisfactory to

Alley's mother. Mrs. Turner had more than once intimated a desire to have the child to bring up as her own; and on Christmas day, when she had brought some little dainties to the sick youth, she exerted all her powers of persuasion in entreaties that Alley might be allowed to remain with her for the winter. The distance from the cabin to the school-house was too far for so young a child during the bad weather, and it would be a thousand pities to keep her at home until spring; by that time she would forget what she had already learned, and she was coming on so fast now, bright little thing as she was! But Johanna had been proof against entreaties and reproaches; and she now, much to her husband's chagrin, insisted that Mick should go the first thing after breakfast and bring the child home. In vain Barney protested against an act "which would give great offence to the people who only wanted to be kind to the wee creature."

"It's no use to be tryin' to blindfold me, Barney. To-morrow is a holiday, as you know; and, please God! the child will go to mass along with her brothers and sister."

And, true to her resolve, as soon as Mick had eaten his breakfast, she said to him:

"Put on your cap, alanna, and go after your little sister, an' mind you don't leave that house without her. You needn't come all the way home; stop and see Mrs. O'Loughlin—she's always glad to see her godson—an' then go on to the church; we'll overtake you in time for mass."

Barney, whose appearance but ill corresponded with the clean, tidy look of his family on this holy day, would not listen without expressing his disapproval of this peremptory order.

"Can't you hear to reason, Johanna, and let the child stay where she'll be comfortable the day? Well, have your own way, and much good it 'ill do you. Maybe they'd eat her if she was left to them a day."

"She's been up there longer than I want; but there was no help for it."

"An' you're sendin' for her in spite of all? Well, well; it's often I've heard that a pig is the stubbornest of all creatures; but, bedad, if a woman don't beat him it's a queer thing!"

And with this profound reflection on the stubbornness of his better half, Barney lighted his dudeen, and prepared to enjoy his holiday in his own lazy fashion, smoking and sleeping. But even he was startled that evening, when Alley, having said her prayers as usual at her mother's knee, began to talk of the pretty prayer she had said to Mrs. Turner the night before; the child could not remember it—it was something about laying down to sleep, and pray the Lord; but it was such a *pretty* prayer, and Mrs.

Turner promised to teach it to her, but Alley wanted her mother to say it for her now.

“Why didn’t Alley say the prayers that mother taught her, like a good child?” asked Johanna.

“Alley did say them, but the mistress says ‘Hail Mary’ and ‘Holy Mary’ is a bad, ugly prayer, and she says God will be angry with Alley if she ever says them again.” And the little thing raised her large innocent eyes to her mother, with all a child’s perplexity, how to reconcile the contradictory teachings of the mother she loved so dearly, and the schoolmistress who was so kind to her.

Johanna Regan, by a strong effort, kept back the bitter words that struggled for utterance: while compelled to send her children to the school, she would not teach any of them to disrespect the master or mistress. But when she returned to the kitchen, she made another attempt to convince her husband that the children’s faith was endangered by their attendance at the proselytising schools. In vain. He owned to feeling vexation at Mrs. Turner’s unwarrantable interference; but then, there was some back rent due, and it would be very inconvenient to displease his lordship just now; and, besides, Mick would be getting some wages along with his learning in the school—the temptation was too great to be resisted.

NOTES

1. Many have been influenced by L. P. Curtis’ seminal *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature*. For my review of the revised version, in which I caution that Curtis still did not do enough to compare anti-Irish racism to racist attitudes in the British Empire as a whole, see Catherine M. Eagan 1997, “Irish Simianization and Postcolonial Theory: L. P. Curtis’s *Apes and Angels Revisited*,” *The Irish Literary Supplement*, 16, no. 2: 27–28.
2. These figures appear in Samuel Wells 1875, *New Physiognomy; or, Signs of Character, Manifested through Temperament and External Forms and Especially in “The Human Face Divine”* (New York: Samuel R. Wells), 537. Samuel Wells was the editor of *The Phrenological Journal*. Courtesy, American Antiquarian Society. I thank Kevin Kenny for introducing me to this illustration when publishing my article in *New Directions in Irish-American History*. Catherine M. Eagan 2003, “‘White’ If ‘Not Quite’: Irish Whiteness in the Nineteenth-Century Irish-American Novel,” in

Kevin Kenny (ed.), *New Directions in Irish-American History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press), 140.

3. In *Apes and Angels*, Curtis provides a helpful overview of the nineteenth-century physiognomy and phrenology that flowed from Aristotle's belief that "“the soul and body sympathize with one another”" (qtd. in Curtis, 6). See Curtis, *Apes and Angels*, 6–12.
4. Eagan, “‘White’ If ‘Not Quite,’” 141. The text accompanying the figures confirms that Bridget is human, with “precisely the same number of organs of body and brain,” but that Irish women have a different “*degree of cultivation*” [emphasis in original]. The text goes on, “the points for the physiologist, phrenologist, and physiognomist to decide are the natural disposition of each, and wherein they differ. He observes the temperaments; the forms of body; learns what parts of body and brain predominate; judges of the degree of culture each has received; compares the quality of one with that of the other, and draws the lines of demarcation [sic]. Both are loving; both are kindly; both are cautious. Here we trace a resemblance; but, on the other hand, the one is bright, intellectual, and spiritual; the other opaque, dull, and sensual.” If this analysis allows that Irish women are human, they clearly do not perform their gender in a way that emulates Anglo-American womanhood.
5. Many have observed that the Civil War did a great deal to further Irish-American assimilation. See for example Dale Knobel 1986, *Paddy and the Republic: Ethnicity and Nationality in Antebellum America* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press), 180. However, theories and pseudo-scientific measurements like John Beddoe’s “index of nigrescence,” advanced in the 1880s, persisted, if they had less power. Curtis, *Apes and Angels*, 20.
6. Frederick Burr Opper 1883, “The Irish Declaration of Independence That We Are All Familiar With,” *Puck*, 13, no. 322, Library of Congress (online), accessed 18 Sept. 2021, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2012645471/>.
7. In *Household Papers and Stories*, an 1896 collection of essays of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s that appeared in American magazines in the 1860s, Stowe advises native American wives to be wary of servants who ““are for the most part the raw, untrained Irish peasantry [...] with all the unreasoning heats and prejudices of the Celtic blood.”” Quoted in Stephen Garrett Bolger 1976, *The Irish Character in American Fiction, 1830–1860* (New York: Arno Press), 54–55. Bolger reports that Stowe recommended “training and experience as a stay against the undermining influence of these Irish servants.” Bolger, 54–55.
8. I make this argument in “‘White’ If ‘Not Quite,’” 140–58.
9. Qtd. in Michèle Lacombe 1984, “Frying-Pans and Deadlier Weapons: The Immigrant Novels of Mary Anne Sadlier,” *Essays on Canadian Writing* 29:

97. The full title of the novel (1855) is *The Blakes and the Flanagans: a Tale, Illustrative of Irish Life in the United States* (New York: P. J. Kennedy).
10. Qtd. in Charles Fanning 1990, *The Irish Voice in America: Irish-American Fiction from the 1760s to the 1980s* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky), 120.
11. Mary Louise Kete 2000, *Sentimental Collaborations: Mourning and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century America* (Durham: Duke University Press), xiv.
12. Kete, *Sentimental Collaborations*, 106–7.
13. Marjorie Howes 2005, “Discipline, Sentiment, and the Irish American Public: Mary Anne Sadlier’s Popular Fiction,” *Eire-Ireland*, 40, no.1–2: 140–69. Paraphrased by Peter D. O’Neill 2017, *Famine Irish and the American Racial State* (London and New York: Routledge), 106–7.
14. David Jerome Callon 2008, “Converting Catholicism: Orestes A. Brownson, Anna H. Dorsey, and Irish America, 1840–1896” (Ph.D. diss., Washington University in St. Louis), 84.
15. Orestes Brownson 1849, review of *Shandy M’Guire*, by Paul Peppergrass [John Boyce], *Brownson’s Quarterly Review*, New Series 3, no. 1: 62. Brownson probably used the word “race” in terms of national or cultural difference; after all, he tirelessly argued that Irish Catholics were capable of assimilating. Nevertheless, he undoubtedly recognized that an insistence on racial difference, whether conceived of as cultural or biological difference, endangered the potential for white American unity.
16. O’Neill, *Famine Irish and the American Racial State*, 8.
17. Mrs. J. Sadlier 1868, *Old and New; or, Taste Versus Fashion* (New York: D. and J. Sadlier & Co.), 229.
18. Sadlier, *Old and New*, 230. Emphasis in original, as is the case for all italicized words and phrases in quotations from the novels.
19. Sadlier, *Old and New*, 113.
20. Nancy Armstrong 1994, “Why Daughters Die: The Racial Logic of American Sentimentalism,” *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 7, no. 2: 2.
21. Toni Morrison 1992, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage-Random House), 6.
22. Christian G. Samito 2009, *Becoming American under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship during the Civil War Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 200.
23. Sadlier, *Old and New*, 212.
24. Thomas Sheridan’s Captain O’Blunder, from *The Brave Irishman; or, Captain O’Blunder. A Farce* (1738) was one of the most popular, staged repeatedly in England as well as America.
25. Notably, Mrs. Von Wiegel’s racial superiority as an Irishwoman bears no relationship to her Protestant or, we assume, Anglo-Irish origins. We are

told that she converted to Catholicism because she finds its history and moral integrity to be superior to those of Protestantism. No mention is made of her “racial” difference to the Fogartys or the Gallaghers, implying that any lingering blood or religious prejudice against Catholics by American Protestants is a foolish denial of their common brotherhood.

26. Sadlier, *Old and New*, 118.
27. Sadlier, *Old and New*, 119.
28. Sadlier, *Old and New*, 120.
29. In a note, Sadlier explains that a fibula was “a large brooch of gold or silver, sometimes ornamented with jewels used by the pagan Irish of both sexes for fastening those long cloaks in which we see them represented.” Sadlier, *Old and New*, 125.
30. Sadlier, *Old and New*, 113.
31. Sadlier, *Old and New*, 129.
32. Sadlier, *Old and New*, 129–30.
33. See note 14.
34. Eamon Wright 2005, *British Women Writers and Race, 1788–1818: Narrations of Modernity* (London: Palgrave Macmillan), xii.
35. Sadlier, *Old and New*, 76–77.
36. Mrs. J. Sadlier 1861, *Bessy Conway; or, The Irish Girl in America* (New York: D. and J. Sadlier). Image courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.
37. Curtis, *Apes and Angels*, 9, Fig. 2. For more on how the facial angle was determined, see Curtis, *Apes and Angels*, 7.
38. Sadlier, *Old and New*, 125–26.
39. Robert J. Nowatzski 2005, “Blurring the Color Line: Black Freedom, Passing, Abolitionism, and Irish Ethnicity in Frank J. Webb’s *The Garies and Their Friends*,” *Studies in American Fiction*, 33, no. 1: 4.
40. Maureen Murphy 2001, “Meaney, Mary L.” *Encyclopedia.com*, (online), accessed 9 Apr. 2021 <https://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/news-wires-white-papers-and-books/meaney-mary-l>. The spelling of Meaney’s last name in the secondary literature varies; Fanning spelled it “Meany” without the second “e,” and my chapter in *New Directions in Irish-American History* went with that spelling as well. The cover pages of her novels note “M. L. M.” as the author name, and the Library of Congress’ copy has “eaney” written in after the last initial “M” on the title page of *The Confessors of Connaught*. In the notes on the source, the Library of Congress notes that the spelling is “from old catalog,” (online), accessed 9 Apr. 2021 <https://www.loc.gov/item/07018508/>
41. “Grace Morton and *Confessors of Connaught* by M. L. M” 1870, *The Catholic World: Monthly Eclectic Magazine of General Literature and Science*, 10, no. 59: 720. See also Fanning, *The Irish Voice in America*, 81.

42. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 26–27.
43. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 27.
44. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 29.
45. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 315–17.
46. Harriet Beecher Stowe (1852) 1994, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (New York: Norton), 207.
47. Wright, *British Women Writers and Race*, 113–14.
48. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 55–61.
49. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 61.
50. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 140.
51. Wright, *British Women Writers and Race*, xii.
52. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 83.
53. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 79–89.
54. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 136.
55. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 170–71.
56. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 275.
57. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 162–63.
58. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 232–37.
59. Clíona Ó Gallchoir 2006, “*Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Irish National Tale,” in Denise Kohn, Sarah Meer, and Emily B. Todd (eds.), *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press), 42–43.
60. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 182–220.
61. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 211. Child kidnapping comes up in *Old and New* as well—the petitioners from the mission send the children out west, even changing their names with the tacit approval of the authorities. Their parents, powerless due to their poverty, cannot find them. See Sadlier, *Old and New*, 121.
62. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 213.
63. M. L. M., *The Confessors of Connaught*, 215.
64. Bridget M. Chapman 2011, “Regular Wild Irish: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in Irish American Fiction” (Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University), 20.
65. Chapman, “Regular Wild Irish,” 19–20.
66. Chapman, “Regular Wild Irish,” 19–20.
67. Marjorie Howes 2006, *Colonial Crossings: Figures in Irish Literary History* (Dublin: Field Day), 40.
68. Catherine Eagan 2006, “Still ‘Black’ and ‘Proud’: Irish America and the Racial Politics of Hibernophilia,” in Diane Negra (ed.) *The Irish in Us: Irishness, Performativity, and Popular Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press), 52.

PART II

Irish American Women's Activism
(1880–1920)



CHAPTER 5

Fanny Parnell: The Songstress of the Land League

Christine Kinealy

The death of Fanny Parnell in 1882, when aged only 33 (or 28, according to some accounts), was mourned by Irish nationalists on both sides of the Atlantic. Unusually, she was grieved equally by men and women. Frances (Fanny) Isabel Parnell had been born on the Avondale Estate in County Wicklow in 1848 (or 1854). Her father's family were wealthy Anglican landowners, while her American-born mother was a granddaughter of Admiral Charles Stewart, naval hero of the 1812 War. Fanny was born into a world of privilege that typified the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. That world, however, had recently undergone a seismic shift caused by the Great Famine, which had not only removed over two million people through death or emigration but had (largely due to the Encumbered Estates Acts) changed the structure of landowning. The Parnell family had survived the Famine but, following her father's death, when Fanny was aged 11, had accrued debts which meant that Avondale had to be rented out. The deeply indebted estate was finally sold by the Parnell family in 1900.¹

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In January 1866, Fanny was presented with other debutantes by the Lord Lieutenant and Lady Wodehouse at the vice-regal court in Dublin Castle.² Seven years later, she was presented to Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace.³ This trajectory was a typical one for daughters of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy, and one that was expected to lead to marriage and children. Fanny chose a very different path. She explained:

Brought up among Anglo-Irish Tories, as I had been, and my mind filled with the bluest Tory principles, nothing less than the constant spectacle of tyranny and cold-blooded heartlessness on one side, and of suffering and degradation on the other, to which it was impossible to blind myself, which would not be thrust aside for all my circumstances of education, would have sufficed to arouse me gradually to a true view of how the case stood between landlord and tenant, between rich and poor, between Protestant and Catholic in Ireland.⁴

Fanny wrote more light-heartedly of her experiences in the “marriage market,” publishing a number of articles in the Paris-based *American Register*, including “Reflections of a Wallflower.”⁵

If Fanny’s talents as writer were evident early on, her two sisters, Anna (1852–1911) and Theodosia (1853–1920) developed their own creative talents: Anna as an artist and Theodosia as a musician. The latter married a naval officer, Claude Paget, in Paris in July 1880,⁶ taking a different path from her more famous, and unmarried, sisters.⁷ Having an American mother gave the Parnell children a transatlantic perspective. Additionally, following her estranged husband’s death in 1859, Delia and her daughters lived in Dublin and Paris. They were in Paris during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, which ended in a humiliating defeat for France. Delia Parnell and Fanny joined the American Ladies’ Committee, working to help the wounded.⁸ Fanny also assisted in raising funds for the American Ambulance.⁹ This involvement gave Fanny a first-hand experience of fighting and war. Following the death of Fanny’s uncle in Paris in 1874, she and her mother returned to their family home, “Ironsides,” in Bordentown, New Jersey.

Fanny’s political involvement came early, even pre-dating that of her brother, Charles. According to Thomas Clarke Luby, a founder of the *Irish People*, Fanny first published in the Fenian newspaper in 1864, when aged only 15.¹⁰ She wrote using the pen-name Aleria.¹¹ Thus, according to

historian R. Barry O'Brien, it was Fanny who first brought Fenian ideas into the Parnell home.¹² Her sister Anna, writing in 1907, suggested that Fanny wrote simply for money and that she had no knowledge of either politics or Ireland.¹³ By this stage, however, Anna had already demonstrated an un-sisterly determination to deny Fanny any place in nationalist history. Other accounts confirm that Fanny was both politically engaged and sympathetic to the Fenians, although she did not support the use of physical force. Nonetheless, in 1865, three of Aleria's poems ("Masada," "The Death Bed Farewell" and "Song") were used by Dublin Castle to convict the Fenian leaders of sedition. There is no evidence that the authorities knew the real identity of the author.¹⁴ According to historian Danae O'Regan, Fanny attended the trial of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa in Dublin in 1865 and was moved to tears.¹⁵ In 1875, her brother Charles was elected to the British parliament. Fanny and Anna attended Westminster and watched his contributions from the Ladies' Gallery, which they referred to as the "ladies' cage." This proved to be a further step in Fanny's political education and consolidated her support for Home Rule.¹⁶ Like many, however, she was radicalized and galvanized by the repeated famines in Ireland, using her pen, and her increasing celebrity, to challenge the British government.

The late 1870s were marked by poor weather and even poorer harvests. The potato failure in parts of the west in 1879 resulted in famine conditions in counties Galway and Mayo.¹⁷ In October 1879, the Land League was formed in Castlebar, dedicated to helping poor tenant farmers resist high rents and brutal evictions. Although the period that followed was referred to as the "Land War," the League was committed to peaceful tactics, holding mass meetings, similar in spectacle to those associated with Daniel O'Connell a generation earlier. While Michael Davitt was the real moving spirit behind the Land League, Charles Parnell was the President, thus combining the power of the parliamentary Home Rule Party with the movement for land reform. Both Davitt and Parnell had been born in 1846, as the Great Hunger was unfolding in Ireland. Whereas Parnell was a son of the "Big House," the Davitt family had been evicted from their small holding in County Mayo in 1850.¹⁸ Coming from diverse social backgrounds, their experiences and memories were different, but both blamed the British government for the catastrophe.

FANNY PARSELL, FAMINE, AND THE LAND LEAGUE

Fanny Parnell had been born at the height of the Great Hunger. Like other nationalists of that generation, she viewed post-Famine periods of food shortages through the prism of the earlier tragedy. Although living in America during the famine of 1879–81, Fanny understood the potential power of fusing appeals for relief with the desire for longer-term social change to an Irish American audience. Her public intervention came early in the process and won her praise from her countrymen in Ireland. In September 1879, she published an appeal to Irish Americans to raise subscriptions for people in the west of Ireland, asking: “Will not the Irish here, who can afford it, give something from their conveniences to help our countrymen in their terrible need. I know that I do not appeal to hard hearts or closed hands.” To encourage donations, she herself wrote a cheque. The Dublin newspaper, the *Irishman*, described Fanny as a “patriotic Irish lady” and predicted that “her name will be received with affection.”¹⁹ A number of newspapers in Ireland offered to act as a conduit for receiving relief raised in the United States. They promised that all sums sent would be acknowledged in the *Pilot*; and that Archbishop MacHale, Charles Stewart Parnell, and T.D. Sullivan, the editor of the Dublin *Nation*, would help to establish a proper agency for distributing the relief in Ireland.²⁰ At that point, the nationalist press was particularly strong in Ireland, with 20 out of the 31 provincial newspapers established between 1880 and 1892 claiming to support Home Rule.²¹ Fanny, and increasingly Charles, understood the importance of this medium.

Follow-up actions came quickly. On 6 October, there was a meeting in Faneuil Hall in Boston to “send a wave of sympathy across the Atlantic Ocean.” A letter from Miss Theodosia Parnell, a sister of Fanny, enclosing \$50 for the relief of Irish farmers, was read, and loudly cheered, and a further contribution of \$50 from Fanny was announced.²² The letter “created a storm of applause which lasted several seconds.”²³ The meeting concluded with the reading of a letter from Michael Davitt, “ex-political prisoner,” in which he claimed that the Land League was destined to do more for Ireland than all the nationalist movements since 1798.²⁴ The much-publicized donations by Fanny and Theodosia prompted a third Parnell sister, Anna, to send a donation. Anna, who had a reputation for being forthright, enclosed a terse letter with her subscription: *Boston Pilot*:—“New York, Nov. 6th, 1879, TO THE EDITOR OF THE PILOT. Please find enclosed a check for fifty dollars in aid of the fund you

are collecting for the tenant farmers in Ireland. There are no more of us left to send subscriptions now,—I remain yours faithfully. Anna Parnell.”²⁵

Fanny did not confine her appeals to the columns of newspapers but spoke publicly on the Famine. This included a lecture in Delmonico’s banqueting hall in New York City to an audience which, although mixed, was primarily composed of women. One of them later recalled: “Those who heard her will never forget the impression she made on us ... with her intense, austere face, quivering, slight figure, and thrilling voice, full of all-consuming earnestness.”²⁶ The high-profile activities of the Parnell sisters provided an opportunity for newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic to praise Charles and his “remarkable” work in Ireland.²⁷ At this stage, Charles was intending to tour the United States on behalf of the Land League, and his sisters proved adept at creating publicity in advance of his arrival. Charles landed in America on 2 January 1880.²⁸ Anna had traveled there in advance of him to assist Fanny in organizing his schedule. In the months preceding his visit, Charles had been criticized in the *New York Tribune*, partly because he was raising funds only for his political activities, while famine was raging in the west of Ireland.²⁹ It was left to Fanny and Anna to defend him, using the columns of the same paper to justify his actions.³⁰ This war of words demonstrated the sisters’ willingness to use the media for political ends and their determination to protect their brother’s public image.

One of Charles’ first actions in the United States was to establish an Irish Land League Famine Relief Fund, partly to answer criticism of his indifference to the situation. Significantly, on the day of his arrival, Charles gave an interview in which he referred to the Great Hunger and claimed: “In 1845, the Queen of England was the only sovereign who gave nothing out of her private purse to the starving Irish. The Czar of Russia gave, as did the Sultan of Turkey, but Queen Victoria sent nothing.”³¹ Parnell’s comments drew anger from across the Atlantic, notably from his political antagonist and defender of Unionism, Lord Randolph Churchill. Churchill cabled his disagreement with Parnell, accusing him of “gross falsehoods.”³² Ironically, only a few weeks earlier, Churchill’s mother, the Duchess of Marlborough, had founded a fund to help relieve the suffering in the west of Ireland.³³ The dispute dragged on in the newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic, with Parnell telling a public meeting that Churchill was wrong.³⁴ In fact, it was Charles whose recounting of the Queen’s contribution was inaccurate, for Victoria had donated £2,000 to the British Relief Association; but he was creating a powerful narrative of English

indifference to Irish suffering.³⁵ Undaunted, Charles continued to attack both the Duchess of Marlborough Relief Fund and the Mansion House Committee, objecting to them including landlords on their committees. His words were widely criticized on both sides of the Atlantic.³⁶ It was an inauspicious start to the tour. Two days after his arrival, Charles lectured to a meeting in Madison Square Gardens. An estimated 8,000 attended, despite a charge of 50 cents. In Irish newspapers, Fanny was also billed as a speaker, but American newspapers merely noted the presence of “Mrs. Parnell and her three daughters.”³⁷ Following his successful appearances in New York, Charles, accompanied by John Dillon, traversed the country, lecturing in 62 cities in 60 days.³⁸ Before he left New York, and perhaps to counter accusations of his indifference to the current famine, Charles established an Irish Land League Famine Relief Fund. Tellingly, he left it to his sisters to manage the Relief Fund, from an office in New York. One of their novel ideas was to leave donation boxes in Post Offices and other central establishments in the major towns.³⁹

For the next two months, Charles undertook an intense lecture tour of America and Canada. A highlight was when he addressed the House of Representatives on February 2. The female Parnells were present. Although it was not admitted publicly, Fanny wrote his speech.⁴⁰ Inevitably, British newspapers were skeptical about Charles’s visit, one paper opining that the “young agitator” would not have been known at all were it not for the attention being paid to him by the *New York Herald*. The paper, however, seemed more intrigued by the Parnell women, particularly by Fanny who, they reported, “is very fond of music, and her voice may often be heard coming through the window singing that melancholy ballad, ‘The Wearing of the Green,’ which is one of her favorites.”⁴¹

Charles returned to the United Kingdom in early March, earlier than anticipated, to contest an unexpected General Election.⁴² He left in his wake both a Famine Relief Fund and a Land League Organization Fund, the latter having raised almost \$25,000. On his departure from the country, the longshore men of New York gave him a cheque for \$1,000 “for the relief of the suffering people of Ireland.”⁴³ Regardless of his sisters’ efforts, many donations had been lost due to Charles’ famed disorganization and reluctance to deal with administration, including his mail.⁴⁴ The improved chances of a good harvest in 1880 may have contributed to a drying up of donations to these funds. However, Charles’ visit to the United States had given him a new-found transatlantic fame—a fame that was only paralleled by Fanny’s. Her poetry was published regularly in the

Irish press, while her fund-raising on behalf of the poor in the west meant that she received many personal requests for assistance, including from convents in Kerry and Galway.⁴⁵ In March 1880, she reported a donation from The Ancient Order of Hibernians for the distress in Ireland, using newspapers to thank “the A. O. H., both of this city and of all America, for their munificent contributions to the Land League funds.”⁴⁶ News of Fanny’s attendance at Land League meetings was also deemed worthy of mention, although she was frequently still defined in relation to Charles, as “the sister of the great ‘agitator.’”⁴⁷ Her activities ensured that she remained in the public eye in Ireland, even though she and her mother were now residing in New Jersey. Moreover, if Charles was often mentioned in reports about Fanny, Fanny was also being mentioned in reference to Charles’ activities. In October 1880, for example, Charles made a triumphant visit to Cork, which was likened to O’Connell’s welcome in 1843. According to one report:

Mr. Parnell was perfectly overwhelmed with bouquets of flowers presented by fair hands; others flourishing huge Champion potatoes on the top of sticks, in allusion to Mr. Parnell’s exertions for the people. The Typographical Society presented him with a beautiful reprint on white satin of Miss Fanny Parnell’s Hymn of the Land League.⁴⁸

HOVELS AND THE POWER OF THE WRITTEN WORD

Both Fanny and Anna, perhaps even more than Charles, realized the value of the written word in winning support for their causes. To this end, on the eve of Charles’s tour of North America, Fanny had produced a treatise entitled, *The Hovels of Ireland*, its purpose being “to create and foster sympathy with Ireland amongst Americans.” Proceeds from sales were to go to the Land League Fund. *Hovels*, which was 65 pages long, included a three-page preface allegedly written by Charles. Fanny explained that her motivations for writing were that Americans had no real knowledge of Ireland, and what information they did have, came from England.⁴⁹ *Hovels* provided a sympathetic, yet not sentimental, view of the Irish peasantry. Indeed, at times Fanny chastised her countrymen who resided in “hovels” for their inertia: “in Ireland there is a national hebetude, a deadly stupor, pervading the whole country, which makes of every man a desponding Rip van Winkle.”⁵⁰ Nonetheless, she argued that the stereotype of the Irish as hopeless and lazy was inaccurate.⁵¹ Fanny identified two injustices that

existed in Ireland: “first, the wrong of English rule as it exists in Ireland; secondly, the wrong of landlord rule as it exists in Ireland.”⁵² She rejected the Malthusian notion of over-population, arguing that Ireland was, in fact, underpopulated, although no less vulnerable than it had been before 1847.⁵³ Fanny opposed emigration, seeing it as the loss of the “life-blood” of the nation.⁵⁴ She rejected the use of physical force, but warned, “if the brute majority cannot get what it wants by the suffrage it will get it by revolution” adding, “It is the duty of every lover of Ireland to prevent abortive risings, which bring each time untold misery on the country.”⁵⁵ Overall, Fanny believed that if landlordism could be abolished and the landlord class eliminated, English power would be broken up.⁵⁶ *Hovels* ended with a personal message from Fanny, “I appeal for sympathy for my prostrate country.”⁵⁷

Hovels was published in the United States but received attention on both sides of the Atlantic.⁵⁸ Fanny’s references to other locations and other writers, and not simply British and Irish authors, demonstrated how well read she was, especially in the field of political economy. The Dublin *Nation*—a champion of Fanny’s work—predicted, “We prognosticate that this little book will meet with a large circulation, and that its publication will net a good sum for the Land League fund, for which excellent reason it first saw the light.”⁵⁹ The author herself was praised, “Noble sentiments nobly expressed by a lady thoroughly worthy of the splendid traditions of her noble kith and kin.”⁶⁰ Shortly after the publication of *Hovels*, Charles published “The Land Question in Ireland” in the prestigious *North American Review*.⁶¹ It is probable that this article and other major speeches by Charles during this period were written by Fanny.⁶² In the article, reference was made to the shadow cast by the famine of 1847.⁶³

By this stage, Fanny’s place as a key person within the transatlantic Land League movement was becoming evident in other ways. In spring 1880, supporters in Liverpool in the north of England decided to hold a fund-raising bazaar in support of the League’s activities. They asked Fanny to be their patron and requested that she supply them with a number of personal items for auction.⁶⁴ Before leaving America, Charles had founded a new organization, “The Irish National Land League of the US.” In May, Davitt traveled to America to put the organization on a firm administrative footing. To welcome him, a meeting “of Irishmen and women” was held at Jones’ Wood near New York City. Attendance was not very large, but enthusiastic. Delia and Fanny were present and were greeted with cheers.⁶⁵ In his speech, Davitt paid tribute to “an illustrious Irishwoman Mrs.

Parnell” and also to Fanny.⁶⁶ To run the new organization, Davitt was assisted by Anna, Fanny having returned to New Jersey.⁶⁷ Regardless of the efforts of the Parnell sisters and Davitt, on both sides of the Atlantic, the Land League was floundering, with the hoped-for financial support from the United States not materializing. Over summer, Anna decided to return to Ireland for health reasons, but Davitt remained until November. At this stage, Fanny was formulating her own ideas of how to re-energize the movement, namely, by involving women. In October 1880, Fanny founded a Ladies’ Land League in America, much to the chagrin of Charles and other male land leaguers, with only Davitt giving it his support.⁶⁸

FANNY PARNELL’S POETRY

Although *Hovels* was well received by the nationalist community, it was for poetry that Fanny was best known. Fanny generally published in the United States, but her poems were frequently reprinted by the Irish press. Her output was prolific, within the region of 40 poems being published in less than 3 years.⁶⁹ Fanny used this literary medium to good effect, cajoling and castigating her countrymen in turn. Her poem, “Coercion—Hold the Rent” provided a poetic dimension to the policies of the Land League, leading Davitt to describe it as a “rousing chorus,” which he quoted in full in his own history of the League.⁷⁰ In 1880, Fanny was publishing at least one poem a month in the *Boston Pilot*, most of which were reprinted in Ireland. They included “Ireland,” which appeared in June,⁷¹ “What shall we weep for” in July,⁷² and “To the Land League” in early August.⁷³ Fanny’s best-known poem of that period was “Hold the Harvest,” itself based on a Land League slogan urging the tenant farmers not to allow their crops to be used to pay rent while they were starving. It first appeared in the *Boston Pilot* on 21 August 1880,⁷⁴ and, within two weeks, had been published in the nationalist press in Ireland.⁷⁵ For Michael Davitt, an admirer of Fanny’s writings, the poem represented “The *Marseillaise* of the Irish peasant.” He also took pride in the fact that, shortly after its publication, “Hold the Harvest” was read in court by the Attorney General and used in evidence against the Land Leaguers and, according to Davitt, “every pulse in court beat faster and eyes glistened and hearts throbbed” as he read it, “in the finest elocutionary manner.”⁷⁶

The themes addressed in “Hold the Harvest” had several similarities to those present in “The Famine Year,” a poem by Speranza that had been

published in the *Nation* in January 1847, at the height of the earlier famine.⁷⁷ Like Speranza, Fanny used the trope of Irish slaves and their British master. Both writers agreed that the toil and the produce of Irish peasants had been stolen from them by the “stranger,” and they each explored poverty and hunger through a series of questions. While agreeing that the periodic famines in Ireland were artificial, their emphasis was different: for Speranza, the fault overwhelmingly lay with the foreign government; for Fanny, it lay with the iniquities of the land system.⁷⁸ Moreover, while Speranza showed sympathy with the plight of the starving poor, Fanny was more critical, goading her countrymen to take action to change the situation. Regardless of Fanny’s commitment to peaceful methods, the poem’s language was bellicose and confrontational, challenging her countrymen to rise up “where now you crawl as slaves.” Despite frequent comparisons with Speranza, Fanny claimed that her own poetic influence lay with Thomas Davis, the Protestant founder of the *Nation* who had died prematurely in 1845. She described him as “Ireland’s greatest patriot” and frequently ended her public lectures by quoting extracts from his poem, “A Nation Once Again.”⁷⁹ While the instant popularity of “Hold the Harvest” might have delighted supporters of the Land League, their opponents railed against it. The poem immediately attracted attention in the British press, most of it negative.⁸⁰ As the following report demonstrated, poetry and poets were being regarded increasingly as part of the propaganda war in Ireland, and Fanny was clearly in the vanguard of the fight:

Violent and reckless orators are not wholly responsible for inciting the Irish people to acts of indiscretion. There is a band of poets springing up, whose inflammatory verse is doing almost as much harm as the utterance of platform agitators. Prominent among the number, we are told by a correspondent, is Miss Fanny Parnell, from whose pen several poetical effusions have recently emanated, and whose latest effort is an address to the Irish farmers, framed in the text of “Hold the Harvest” [...] Miss Parnell, indeed, seems to revel in strong terms, and she scatters her maledictory substantives about in a manner that would be amusing were it not for the fact that such verse, trashy though it be, exercises a powerful influence upon the excitable Irish temperament.⁸¹

Even the provincial press throughout England felt compelled to comment on Fanny’s “Seditious Poetry.” The *Huddersfield Chronicle*, for

example, described her as the leading poet who was preaching “a gospel of force.” The paper also pointed out, in great detail, the various ways that Fanny had chastised the “tenants of the Green Isle,” explaining:

Miss Parnell turns viciously upon the poor people who seek a home in other lands. Her vocabulary of abuse is a strong one. She calls the ‘trembling emigrant’ a ‘lucre-loving wretch’, a ‘coward’ a ‘sordid churl’, a ‘recreant’. From this digression the fair poetess returns again to the farmer, reminding him of what he probably did not know—that his fields are fertilised with the ashes of his slaughtered fathers.⁸²

The London-based *Morning Post* lamented the effect that the Parnell family was having on Irish Americans, with “Hold the Harvest” being singled out for special condemnation:

What effect is produced upon the Irish-American mind by this course of training and long years of secret organisation may readily be understood from the highly inflammatory poem of Mr. Parnell’s sister, which is now being sung throughout the neighbouring island. The lady in question resides with her mother in the United States, and has really nothing whatever to do with Ireland and its troubles; her rhapsodical cry to arms is therefore all the more indicative of the feeling of her brother’s admirers and supporters in America [...] This is the sort of political appeal now being constantly made in newspapers and songs to excitable Irishmen in both hemispheres; and such harangues are likely to produce more terrible fruits among American-born Irishmen than among Irishmen at home [...] What Miss Parnell sings, Mr. Parnell speaks.⁸³

Interestingly, “Hold the Harvest” and its author were praised in the *Illustrated London News* by the experienced writer, George Augusta Sala. While disassociating himself from its political message, he applauded the strength of the writing and Fanny’s poetic ability. His praise, in turn, drew more scorn. One northern English newspaper referred to Fanny as the sister of the “terrible” Charles, but added that his politics, “desperate as they are considered on this side of the Channel, are ‘sweetness and light’ when compared with those of the fair siren whose song has enthralled the great George.” The paper referred unequivocally to Fanny’s work as “fiercely seditious poetry.”⁸⁴ Overall, newspaper after newspaper, when reporting on Land League activities, referred to the role of the poets in general, and the writings of Fanny in particular, in inflaming the passions

of Irish tenant farmers.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, even those who opposed her writings acknowledged her as the leading poet of nationalist Ireland.⁸⁶

As Fanny's poetry was continuing to cause both delight and consternation in Britain and Ireland, she was developing a plan to establish a Ladies' Land League in North America.⁸⁷ She explained her motivation as being that:

The funds of the Land League, which had increased so rapidly while Mr Dillon and my brother were here in this country, had fallen off to almost nothing, a few hundred dollars a week; and it occurred to me that by setting the women at work a much needed stimulus would be given to the men; I mentioned the idea to Mr Davitt a few days afterwards and he WAS delighted with it and said it would be a capital plan, if it could be carried out.⁸⁸

The reality was more complex. Davitt later admitted that "this suggestion was laughed at by all except Mr Egan and myself, and vehemently opposed by Messrs Parnell, Dillon and Brennan, who feared we would invite public ridicule in appearing to put women forward in places of danger."⁸⁹ Davitt was adamant, however, that when the men were imprisoned, as it appeared they would be, "No better allies than women could be found."⁹⁰ As expected, the all-male leadership of the Land League was arrested in Ireland in October 1880.

In early August 1880, from her home in Bordentown, Fanny used her personal fame and her skill with a pen to issue a public appeal—"To the Irish Land Movement in America. MISS FANNY PARNEll TO HER COUNTRYWOMEN." It first appeared in the New York *Irish World* but two weeks later was reprinted in newspapers in Ireland.⁹¹ Fanny's appeal was to Irish women and Irish American women living in the United States. The appeal was long and eloquent. It commenced:

These are times that try men's souls in Ireland. The nation stands on the brink of tremendous conflict ... It is a conflict not only between class and class, between landlord and serf, but between English colonist and Irish native. It is also a conflict between the vested privileges of feudalism and modern civilization. Which is to win? ... The struggle will be a life and death one. It will be made by the majority of a nation for leave to exist. There will be three million men, women, and children pitted against some ten thousand landlords, with such troops as England can spare from Afghanistan and India—I trust that these may be few indeed—at their backs. The landlords are shouting to the Irish—To Hell or America! Well, America is not a bad

place, but Ireland is a far better place, if it only had just laws. Everything is there to make the people happy—a most fertile soil, excellent resources, a temperate climate, a high-toned morality, an intense devotion to religion. We only want liberty and good laws.⁹²

Fanny continued by asking her countrywomen what they were going to do? She cited the example of Carraroe in Galway, which had gained grim notoriety for the evictions that had taken place in January 1880, but where women and children had resisted, “in front of the bayonets of the soldiery, and tore the processes from the process-servers, and saved their husbands and their children from eviction and starvation.”⁹³ She added:

This winter heroic women as well as heroic men will be wanted in Ireland ... Somebody has said that suffering beings belong especially to women ... I entreat countrywomen here not to belie the reputation of their sex. I tell them that no greater, more vital issues have ever been before a nation than are now before Ireland.

Fanny’s appeal concluded by explaining what women could do:

Let Irish women form Women’s Land Leagues to help the Land League in Ireland. Compassion and enthusiasm are women’s attributes, and these are two things that are essentially needed in this Land League work. Harmony, too, is needed, and here I think women could show the men a bright example; we could try to, at any rate. The business of organisation would be simple enough. Let the women in every town and city where there is any patriotic feeling organise branches of the Irish Land League, placing the admission fees at one dollar per head, and sending all sums collected either to Mr. Michael Davitt, Room 40, University Building, Washington-square, New York City, or direct to Patrick Egan, 62 Middle Abbey-street, Dublin, Ireland.

Fanny offered to help anybody who wanted to form “Women’s Leagues,” but warned, “the time is pressing, the crisis is approaching, and their help is needed now or never.”⁹⁴

Privately, Fanny was less confident about the success of her appeal, admitting, “I need not say that I put my whole soul into it; I sent it for publication to every Irish-American paper whose address I could get ... Weeks passed without any response.”⁹⁵ The first person to contact Fanny was Miss Jane Bryce, of New York. Other responses followed and it was

decided that if a Ladies' Land League could be formed first in New York, others would follow.⁹⁶ The New York meeting was intended to convene in the first week of October, but Fanny was ill, so it was postponed. On 15 October, the Ladies' Irish National Land League was founded officially in New York, a year after the men's league.⁹⁷ Forty women were present at the inaugural meeting. Fanny's constitution was accepted and an executive elected, with Delia Parnell as President, Ellen Ford as Vice President, and Fanny the Secretary, although, in effect, she remained the main force behind it. One hundred dollars were collected and sent to Egan in Dublin.⁹⁸ Three weeks later, a large public meeting was convened, attended by more than 3,000 people, at which \$1,000 was collected.⁹⁹ Following this, other branches were established, one of the first being in San Francisco. Fanny was at the center of this activity and, as a consequence, "For two months I wrote letters incessantly, day and night."¹⁰⁰ Before Davitt left the United States, the Ladies' Land League organized a meeting in New York at which he made his final speech in the country.¹⁰¹ Fanny's abiding respect for Davitt was made clear in an eponymous poem, in which she described Davitt as bringing Irish people out of "the slime and squalor" and "the slough of the despond."¹⁰²

By the end of 1880, there were approximately 400 branches of the Ladies' Land League in North America and they were providing practical assistance to over 3,000 evicted Irish tenants. Their success encouraged Fanny to ask Anna to create a parallel movement in Ireland. Anna, however, was reluctant to do so, despite Fanny explaining, "A good many farmers' wives had written to me from various parts of Ireland asking information about forming Ladies' Land Leagues, I gave them as minute instructions as I could but, not having any leader, they remained feeble."¹⁰³ Again, it was left to Fanny to fill the vacuum. On 1 January 1881, Fanny wrote to the *Nation* suggesting that Irish women should follow the example of women in America.¹⁰⁴ In this regard, Fanny had an important ally in Michael Davitt. Davitt had returned to Ireland with full knowledge of his likely re-imprisonment and he realized that a Ladies' Land League would keep the movement buoyant while the male leaders were incarcerated. Although Charles and John Dillon were not in favor of Davitt's proposal, thinking that it would lead to ridicule, they reluctantly agreed. Davitt also persuaded Anna to give her support. Consequently, on 31 January 1881, the Ladies' Irish National Land League was established in Dublin. The President was Anne Deane, but the force behind it was Anna Parnell.¹⁰⁵ In February, mirroring what Fanny had done some months earlier, they

issued a lengthy appeal to their countrywomen to get involved to ensure that the evictions did not become massacres.¹⁰⁶ Why were the men persuaded to support a Ladies' Land League? According to historian Jane Côté, they did so in the belief that the League would confine itself to charitable support, that is, to "women's peculiar province."¹⁰⁷ By doing so, they underestimated not only the determination and ability of the female leadership but also the desire of women on both sides of the Atlantic to be part of an agenda of change.

In early 1881, while the land question was being debated in the British parliament—and large-scale evictions were continuing to take place in Ireland—Fanny arranged a fund-raising raffle in the United States. She urged people who wanted to help to telegram money for speed, simultaneously apologizing if she appeared to be dictating what actions they should take.¹⁰⁸ The passing of the Land Act in August 1881, which made improvements to the condition of tenants but did not grant full proprietorship, disappointed many Land Leaguers. Fanny responded poetically with "Post Mortem," in which she looked forward to Irish independence:

Let me join with you the jubilant procession. Let me chant with you her story; Then contented I shall go back to the shamrocks, Now mine eyes have seen her glory.¹⁰⁹

Again, here, as on other occasions, Fanny demonstrated her knowledge of what was taking place on the other side of the Atlantic and her willingness to comment on it. Moreover, she was determined that the work of the Ladies' Leagues in America should continue. In December 1881, Fanny placed an appeal in the *Boston Pilot*, looking for more involvement by women:

We have a great want of women to travel round the country and visit people. They ought to have intelligence, physical strength, reliability and a certain amount of education and refinement, besides not being too young. If you think you know anyone to send, or several, who would suit, you could send them over. We could pay all their expenses.¹¹⁰

The activities of the Parnell women gave them a public profile that at times rivaled that of Charles'. In March 1881, the *Celtic Monthly* included a long article praising the three Parnell women.¹¹¹ In the same month,

Daniel Connolly's poem "Ireland's Daughters," dedicated to the Ladies' Land Leagues, was published in the *Pilot*. Praising Fanny in particular, he averred, "the grand old cause has found a new Speranza."¹¹² The activities of the women were also being picked up on the other side of the world. An article on the Land League that first appeared in the *San Francisco Mail News* and was reprinted in a New Zealand newspaper stated: "A new factor in the Irish question is the appearance of woman as active workers. Miss Anna Parnell and Mrs A.M. Sullivan are at the front, organising women's Land Leagues in Ireland. Mrs Parnell, Miss Fanny Parnell and Miss Ellen Ford have done excellent work of the same kind here. The women's movement in Ireland is valuable and timely just now."¹¹³ While the involvement of the other women may have been noted, Fanny was the real star of the movement. By 1881, she was a political and literary celebrity on both sides of the Atlantic. Lockets containing her portrait were being sold for one shilling.¹¹⁴ In October of that year, a song commemorating her, written by M. G. Giannetti, was published in Ireland and sold by the *Nation* office in Dublin.¹¹⁵

In addition to her other activities, in the early 1880s, Fanny continued to be an indefatigable and talented lecturer. Her appearances generated as much excitement as Charles's had done some months earlier. Nonetheless, Fanny seemed acutely aware of her deficiencies, often prefacing her lectures with an apology for her lack of words.¹¹⁶ In mid-1881, Fanny toured North America, using her public profile as an opportunity to praise Irish women in general, "who have always been found ready to take their share of the danger of heroic toil."¹¹⁷ On 4 July 1881, Fanny lectured in the Music Hall in Quebec City. To greet her, there was a display of flags on many of the streets.¹¹⁸ One local newspaper claimed, "The old rock city has never had a more honoured guest."¹¹⁹ Particular tribute was paid to the Parnell family, "which is destined to revolutionize the system of government under which a people has groaned for centuries."¹²⁰ Women on the platform alongside Fanny included Miss Davis, president of the Ladies' Land League in Montreal and a niece of the late Thomas Davis.

Fanny's lecture was described as short but to the point and witty. It received "thunders of applause." She told the audience that it was the "duty of women now to work for her [Ireland's] regeneration" as men, "should not be left alone to work out this great movement. Women should aid and their aid would be all powerful."¹²¹ Fanny also lectured in the Albert Hall in Montreal, attracting almost as large an audience as her brother had. A feminine touch had been provided by the local ladies'

branch of the Land League who had created a canopy to wrap around her seat, “constructed of a rich green material, and from it were suspended festoons of natural and artificial flowers and drapery of orange and green intertwined.”¹²² Hanging on the stage also were, “the green flag of Erin, the Stars and Stripes, the French Tricolour, and the Dominion flag.” Fanny was greeted with a standing ovation. When being introduced, her gender was referred to and women were singled out for tribute, “Guided by your dauntless mother, side by side with your devoted sister, surrounded by those other intrepid women who seeing the good they could do have not hesitated to do it, even though the thoughtless might sneer.” Fanny was particularly praised for combining her patriotism with “the modesty of a lady.” Fanny’s message was consistent with that given in “Hovels,” she stating, “The English Government was not by any means the worst enemy the Irish people had.” She explained, “It was the feudal government in Ireland that had created so deplorable a state of affairs in that country, and brought into existence the greedy landlord, the land-grabber, and that meanest of all spies, the police-constable spy.” Regarding the Irish Constabulary, she suggested, to “great applause,” that “If the women had boycotted them, very few of them would have remained in the force.”¹²³

Despite having broken through so many boundaries, Fanny remained defined by her gender. At times, she appeared frustrated by the limitations placed on her. This was evident in her poem “Ireland, Mother?” (1880), which included the following stanzas:

Vain, ah vain, is a woman’s power;
 Vain is a woman’s hot despair
 Naught she can do, naught can she dare –
 I am a woman, and can naught for thee,
 Ireland, Mother! ...

Were I a man from thy glorious womb,
 I’d hurl a stone from thy living tomb ...
 I’d smite thy foes with thy own long doom,
 While God’s heaped judgements should around them loom,
 Were I a man, lo! This I would do for thee,
 Ireland, Mother!¹²⁴

T.D. Sullivan, MP, a Home Rule member in Westminster, claimed that in one of the many letters he received from Fanny, she had admitted that she had “just one thing to regret, and that was that she was not born a brother to Mr. Parnell in order that she might aid him in his battle for the rights of Ireland.” When Sullivan relayed this to an audience in Ireland, it was met with loud applause and cheers.¹²⁵

However, Fanny’s comment may have been deliberately disingenuous as no man could have made the appeals to women that her gender allowed her to make. Regardless of Fanny’s overt militancy, those who knew her personally were determined to show that Fanny always remained “womanly”—clearly an important attribute for a female with a public profile. Margaret Sullivan, who worked with Fanny on Land League activities, extolling Fanny’s feminine charms, observed:

What views she held upon the political aspects of the Land League agitation are set forth in her poems; but the practical work of the women of Ireland and America within the agitation was not, in her understanding of its nature and scope, political; it was purely humane, charitable, Christian. It *was* “pure womanly.”¹²⁶

As a role model for other women, Fanny’s public pronouncements were important, as an anonymous letter to the editor of the *Dublin Weekly Nation* demonstrated:

Many of our great public men have during the recent public meetings advocated the education of the manhood of Ireland in the past and present history of their country. Now, having read Miss Fanny Parnell’s address to her fellow-countrywomen, I would most humbly suggest that a little attention be given to the culture of our womanhood, for certainly much of our country’s future depends on the education of the present generation of women as well as men. I think, without in the least degree verging on that odious agitation for “women’s rights,” the training of the girlhood of Ireland in national ideas could be very practically carried on in connection with the Land League.—Gratefully yours, A Young Irish Girl.¹²⁷

In addition to all her political activities, Fanny continued to write poetry. The early part of 1882 was a busy time for Fanny. The year commenced with the publication of an unusually whimsical poem. It first

appeared in Boston and was reprinted in Ireland. In “Maudle Caudle,” Fanny parodied Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic movement—at that time, Wilde was touring the United States, promoting aestheticism:

Oh, young Maudle Caudle has come out East
 To give us poor vulgar Yankees a feast.
 And save his good tights, he trousers has none,
 He’s come all unshorn, and he’s come all alone;
 Oh, to lisp and to pose, and to languish and dawdle,
 There never was a youth like the great Maudle Caudle.¹²⁸

The 48-line poem, which demonstrated great familiarity with the young Irishman’s doings, was bitter-sweet, given that Fanny was so frequently compared to the poet Speranza, who was Oscar Wilde’s mother. In May 1882, *Land League Songs*, a collection of ballads by Fanny, was published in America. The fly-leaf inscription was sarcastically dedicated to “The persecutor of the poor, the hunter of the priests, and the shooter of women and children—William Buckshot Forster these poems are respectfully dedicated by the author, Fanny Parnell.”¹²⁹ On 18 July, Fanny published a seven-page political treatise entitled “The Nationalization of Land versus Peasant Proprietorship.”¹³⁰ In it, she tackled, head-on, an issue that was proving to be divisive within the Land League. Again, it demonstrated her knowledge of the law and of economics, combined with her skills as a political commentator. Two days later, Fanny Parnell was dead. She was 33 years old.

Although various people, including Margaret Sullivan, had commented on Fanny’s delicate health and her punishing work schedule, her premature death came as a shock.¹³¹ She probably died of heart failure, and it is unclear if she was aware of her own condition. When Charles had left the United States in March 1880, amidst throngs of people, Fanny had stood to one side:

Someone present, noticing her abstraction, jokingly remarked that she did not seem to participate in the general enthusiasm: to which she quietly replied—“I am waiting till the crowd goes, to bid Charley good-bye. He is going back to Ireland, to do his duty; and heaven knows if we shall ever meet in life again.”¹³²

Following Fanny's early death, these sentiments seemed prophetic, as the siblings did not meet again. The news of her death was said to have "prostrated" Anna, whose "health had already suffered from her labours in connection with the land agitation."¹³³ Fanny's passing was carried in newspapers throughout the world. In a notice published in Boston, fresh comparisons were drawn with the still-living Speranza, "we have to accord her place that has been reached by no lady since Lady Wilde wrote her stirring national lyrics to the *Dublin Nation*."¹³⁴ *The New York Sun* opined that Fanny had died from all her exertions on behalf of the Land League, thus making her a martyr in the cause of Irish independence—an opinion that was repeated in Ireland.¹³⁵ Fanny was also extolled as "the lady who gave her jewels, and time, and brains to the furtherance of the league movement."¹³⁶

Fanny was buried on 24 July 1882 at her home in New Jersey. Approximately 120 delegates from Land League branches attended, with women delegates leading the procession. Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa was one of those present, as was Sabina Davitt, sister of Michael.¹³⁷ The imagery was striking. Fanny's body was laid in a white oak casket with gold mountings, including a gold plate with the inscription: "Fanny Parnell, died July 20th, 1882. Aged 28 years." She was dressed in a white satin embroidered dress and white kid slippers, her head resting on a white satin pillow, on which lay a bunch of shamrocks from the Vale of Avoca, where Fanny had been born. Alongside the body was a scroll containing a poem by Mary Frances Smith of Bordentown. Nearby, was a slab bearing the first eight lines of Fanny's poem, "The Utterances of an Irish Heart":

What! Give our land to England?
 What! Give our land to you?
 Our ravished land, whose every rood
 Our patriots' bones bestrew!

Our blood-steeped land—our plundered land,
 With seeds of martyrs sown!
 Our tortured land—our writhing land,
 Which yet we call our own!¹³⁸

The funeral party proceeded to Riverview cemetery in Trenton where, following the service, the casket was placed in a holding vault.¹³⁹ Before

the burial, John Heath, a sculptor from Philadelphia, obtained a plaster cast of Fanny's face.¹⁴⁰

Shortly after Fanny's death, a decision had been made by her mother and friends in America to return her body to Ireland for a public funeral. Given her fame and popularity, not to mention her youth and beauty, it seemed a perfect opportunity for a nationalist propaganda coup. A similar return had been carried out 20 years earlier with Young Irelander, Terence McManus.¹⁴¹ The expectation was that Trenton would only be the first stop on the journey to Ireland, where she would "rest among the shamrocks she loved so well."¹⁴² This hope had been strengthened by the fact that, the day before the funeral, Messrs. Williams and Guion had offered to take the casket to Ireland, free of expense—an offer that had been accepted by Delia.¹⁴³ To this end, a committee was appointed in the United States, which met in New York on 8 August. It comprised prominent Land Leaguers, men and women, including Mrs. Kate A. Diggs, president of the New York Ladies' branch. A telegram was received from John Boyle O'Reilly, explaining: "I cannot attend, but will endorse your action heartily. Let her be buried in Ireland. Her dead lips will speak more powerfully than ours living." The committee agreed to cable John Dillon to enquire whether the Land League would be agreeable to the body and the delegates arriving in Ireland. It was expected that about 25 delegates would accompany Fanny.¹⁴⁴

To arrange for Fanny's initial transfer to Boston and then onwards to Ireland, the Land League of Boston held a special meeting. The Committee on Obsequies consisted of P. A. Collins, John Boyle O'Reilly, Thomas P. Doherty, W. H. Keenan, John Tighe, P. A. Hartnett, P. O'Loughlin, Mrs. John M'Goorty, Mrs. J. Murphy, and Mrs. Harrington.¹⁴⁵ Fanny's remains traveled from Trenton to Philadelphia, onwards to New York, and from there, by railway, to Boston. On each step of the journey, they were escorted by military and civic processions.¹⁴⁶ The casket arrived in Boston on 19 October and was met by male and female delegates of the Massachusetts Land Leagues. It was taken to the home of Mrs Tudor, a relative of Delia, for the funeral service. Following the service, the casket was moved to the Tudor family vault in Mount Auburn cemetery. It was intended to be a temporary arrangement.¹⁴⁷ Regardless of these elaborate plans, Fanny's remains were never returned to Ireland. Charles sent a curt telegram that was made public:

My brother, sisters and I desire my sister's remains should rest in America, the country where she was best known, where she had friends, and where she lived and worked so many years.¹⁴⁸

Consequently, Fanny remained in an unmarked grave in Boston.¹⁴⁹ The decision not to honor a truly transatlantic hero of the Land League movement represented a lost opportunity for a public display of mourning and unity. At this stage, however, Charles was negotiating with the British government and had already decided to disband the Land Leagues. In April 1882, Charles signed the Kilmainham Treaty with William Gladstone, which had led to his release from prison on May 2. A short time after Fanny's death, in August 1882, Charles dissolved the Ladies' Land Leagues. A number of these organisations were reconstituted into Ladies' Irish National Land Leagues, but their role was to be purely educational, "for the purpose of teaching the rising generation the history of their country as well as to encourage the circulation of national literature."¹⁵⁰ Anna never forgave, or spoke to, her brother again.

How would Fanny have responded to this betrayal? It is hard to imagine that she would have accepted it any more than her sister had. The uncompromising views shared by Fanny and Anna did not fit into this new narrative of compromise. In this climate, a funeral in Ireland to honor Fanny might have re-inflamed nationalist opinion. Consequently, the short life of the most successful transatlantic nationalist movement ever, which had been initiated and run by women, was ended. Moreover, the dissolution was followed by decades of rewriting of the history of the Ladies' Land League, with Fanny being refashioned as simply a poetic beauty and Anna as an angry fanatic. They were both so much more.

If Charles had tried to bury the memory of Fanny's militancy in Ireland, she was not forgotten on either side of the Atlantic. Her resting place in Boston became a place of pilgrimage for Irish Americans on Memorial Day. Periodically also, the issue of relocating Fanny's remains emerged, particularly following the premature death of Charles in 1891. It was reported in 1898, Delia's year of death,¹⁵¹ that:

Certain patriotic Irish ladies of New York City have made arrangements to have the body of Miss Fanny Parnell, sister of Charles Stewart Parnell, the late Irish leader, disinterred and sent to Ireland to lie by the body of their mother, Mrs. Delia Parnell, who died recently. Charles S. Parnell was planning, just before his death, to have the body of his sister, who died at

Bordentown, N.J., on July 28, 1882, at the age of 28, taken to Ireland for final burial. She took an active interest in Irish affairs and had expressed the wish to lie in her native soil. Her body is now in a Boston cemetery.¹⁵²

Other American newspapers intermittently took up the cause of Fanny's unmarked grave—suggesting that either a fitting monument be built in Boston or the remains to be taken and laid besides her brother in Glasnevin.¹⁵³ Nothing came of these discussions.

Fanny's poetry was also remembered. In 1888, Daniel Crilly MP gave a lecture to the Southwark Irish Literary Society in London entitled “Fanny Parnell: A Record and a Study.”¹⁵⁴ He referred to her as “The dead songstress of the Land League” opining, “The spirit of song and the spirit of independence are closely akin.”¹⁵⁵ In his opinion, Fanny's poetry was not as good as that of Speranza or Elizabeth Browning, but like them, “In their force there is a severity that is almost more than manlike—as has always been the case with women poets.” In the course of his speech, Crilly admitted the important role of women in the struggle for Irish independence, saying that the Ladies' Land League “did so much to bring balm and help to the desolated homesteads of her native land.”¹⁵⁶ In a book of Irish poets published in London in 1893, Fanny was referred to as “a leading figure in the early land league meetings” and as “having many gifts.” However, the author could find no published copies of her works in England.¹⁵⁷ It was an early example of Fanny being written out of the historical record. Nonetheless, Fanny continued to be commemorated in poems and songs, a number of which were passed down in oral tradition.

Was Fanny a talented poet? Writing in 1995, Terry Eagleton claimed that she wrote “politically forceful if artistically feeble verses.”¹⁵⁸ Perhaps she was too prolific, too passionate, too unpolished, to be great. Nonetheless, Fanny inspired a generation of nationalists of both genders on each side of the Atlantic. In 2003, Paula Bennett suggested that Fanny's popularity was more complex than she had been given credit for, especially regarding her understanding of Irish America:

Her poems had articulated their hopes and their despairs, their glimpses of the Promised Land and their yearning for it, their shame, their rage, and their frustration, and that was what they buried; the voice that gave their passions tongue. What they mourned was themselves, their loss of home and manhood and the country of their desire. If the intensity of Parnell's passion measures less her “Irishness” than the degree to which she romanticized an

identity that she—a woman, well-heeled and Anglo-Irish at that—never had, this was an identity that her mourners could not claim either, not so long as they too remained in Ireland’s “empire beyond the seas.”¹⁵⁹

Why did Fanny write? When submitting a little-known manuscript, “Felo de Se,”¹⁶⁰ to a publisher in London, she explained that she did not require payment because she wrote, “to fill my leisure moments.”¹⁶¹ As she became better known, she claimed that she did not want literary fame, but that her poems were a means to increase awareness of social issues.¹⁶² In this way, and the fact that Fanny was so often likened to Speranza, the poet of the 1840s, showed that nationalist women writers and activists had a public lineage. A generation later, Yeats would refer to Maud Gonne as the new Speranza.¹⁶³

Inevitably, part of the early memory of Fanny’s politics was shaped by Michael Davitt’s 1904 book on the history of the Land League, *The Fall of Feudalism*. He had known Fanny personally and she, in turn, admired him greatly. Davitt credited Fanny with founding the Ladies’ Land League and described her as “a rebel to her heart’s core,” praising her “songs of liberty.” He, like many other nationalists, compared Fanny to Speranza.¹⁶⁴ For Davitt, her words inspired Irish nationalists, while her poetry “electrified the crowded audience.” He singled out “Hold the Harvest,” which “with its fine appeal to the God of the poor, gave expression to Ireland’s awakened hope to wrench the soil in one supreme struggle from the hands of the heirs to confiscation.”¹⁶⁵ Davitt realized that Fanny’s contributions lay beyond poetry. He had worked with both Fanny and Anna first-hand, but said of Fanny:

Miss Parnell was a practical as well as a poetic reformer, and one of her proposals, a little varied in its plan and purpose, had probably more to do with the defeat of Mr Forster’s coercion policy than all of the other plans put into action against it by the leaders at home.¹⁶⁶

The pacifist and feminist Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, writing a few years after Davitt, described the Ladies’ Land League as, “the most important of all the developments of the original plan.”¹⁶⁷ He was fulsome when praising its founder:

Fanny Parnell was the noblest and purest minded patriot of the Parnell family, and had not her fiery soul “fretted the pigmy body to decay,” and

brought her to an untimely death, her genius might have won for her a place beside the Maid of Orleans among the liberating heroines of history.¹⁶⁸

The early praise was not sustained. According to historian Jane Coté, by the 1920s the Parnell sisters had been largely written out of the history of the Land League or, if mentioned, were defined by Anna's perceived "fanaticism."¹⁶⁹ For the most part, Fanny was ignored, or simply referred to as the beautiful poet.¹⁷⁰ Although their roles were recovered partially in late twentieth-century writings, this was mostly achieved by women historians, with the Parnell sisters failing to be integrated into mainstream histories.¹⁷¹ For example, one otherwise excellent study of almost 400 pages, published in 2014 on Parnell's use of the nationalist press, devoted only 3 pages to Ladies' Land Leagues—despite the fact that they had kept newspapers up and running—and included only a brief mention of Fanny.¹⁷²

Both Charles and Anna Parnell must also take some responsibility for airbrushing Fanny out of Land League history. In a report to a Special Commission in 1881, Anna made no mention of Fanny but claimed that the idea for a Ladies' Land League was Davitt's alone.¹⁷³ Over 20 years later, Anna wrote *The Great Sham* (although written in 1904, it was not published until 1986), because she felt that women had been betrayed in Davitt's account. Again, Anna made no mention of Fanny's role in creating the first Ladies' Land League or of the American organization in providing inspiration for its Irish counterpart.¹⁷⁴ By these means, Anna betrayed the memory of her own sister twice. Furthermore, the new wave of Irish women's history that emerged at the end of the twentieth century frequently minimized the role of Fanny and the American women activists as the originators of the movement. Instead, Anna was given sole credit for bringing women, however briefly, into the Land League.¹⁷⁵

How should Fanny Parnell be remembered? As a philanthropist, poet, political activist, polemicist, propagandist, or patriot? Or as a dutiful daughter and loyal sister? She was all of these things. In her short life, Fanny acquired a transatlantic presence in the nationalist movement that was unique and distinct from her famous brother's. To her admirers, she was, simply, "the poet of the Irish movement."¹⁷⁶ But she was more than a poet. During her short life, she became indelibly linked with Irish nationalism in America. Moreover, she was often the only woman named.¹⁷⁷ Fanny used her prose, her poetry, and her public presence in the service of the poor of Ireland and the nationalist movement. Both Fanny and her sister invaded the public sphere of politics that was overwhelmingly a male preserve.

Interestingly, unlike the women who had contributed to the *Nation* in the 1840s and had all written under pseudonyms, to preserve both their identity and their gender, Fanny had used her own name, making her gender and her family connections obvious. In 1881, Fanny wrote, “It sometimes happens that the light thrown on a subject is *coloured* to suit the chromatic taste of the illuminator.”¹⁷⁸ During her life and following her death, Fanny was perceived through many different lights, including several that rendered her occasionally invisible. Whatever light is used to view Fanny, her contribution to Irish nationalism in the late nineteenth century was remarkable and her colors remained vibrant long after her death.

**EXCERPT 1: FANNY PARNELL, “HOLD
THE HARVEST” (1880)**

Now are you men or cattle then, you tillers of the soil?
 Would you be free, or evermore in rich men’s service toil?
 The shadow of the dial hangs dark that points the fatal hour
 Now hold your own! Or, branded slaves, forever cringe and cower!
 The serpent’s curse upon you lies—you writhe within the dust
 You fill your mouths with beggars swill, you grovel for a crust
 Your masters set their blood-stained heels upon your shameful heads
 Yet they are kind—they leave you still their ditches for your beds!
 Oh by the God who made us all, the master and the serf
 Rise up and swear to hold this day your own green Irish turf!
 Rise up! And plant your feet as men where now you crawl as slaves
 And make your harvest fields your camps, or make of them your graves!
 But God is on the peasant’s side, the God that loves the poor,
 His angels stand with flaming swords on every mount and moor,
 They guard the poor man’s flocks and herds, they guard his ripening grain,
 The robber sinks beneath their curse beside his ill-got gain.

**EXCERPT 2: FANNY PARNELL, FROM: *THE HOVELS
OF IRELAND* (NEW YORK: THOMAS KELLY, 1880), 3–4, 7,
8–9, 10, 19–21, 56, 58, 62–3, 65**

The net proceeds arising from the sale of this Publication will be sent to the Irish Land League for Relief.

Upon the question, “What is the worst bread which is eaten?” one answered, in the respect of the coarseness thereof, bread made of beans.

Another said, bread made of acorns. But the third hit the truth and said, bread taken out of other men's mouths, who are the proprietors thereof.

It is a fact well known to everybody that for many years great misery has existed in a chronic form amongst the agricultural classes of Ireland. The laborer has been but a hair's-breadth better off than the pig he feeds on the refuse he himself finds it impossible to eat, and the farmer has been but a hair's-breadth better off than the laborer he employs. Hopeless, voiceless poverty, whose only care has been to save by every imaginable kind of stinting a few pennies to educate the children of the hovel, and to contribute to the support of the peasant's only consolation—his religion—has been the lot for generations upon generations of the great mass of Ireland's population.

Until lately, however, this poverty, frightful as it is, has excited but little sympathy even amongst the most liberal nations, and amongst the people that rule Ireland, and are consequently responsible for her condition, it has met chiefly with contemptuous sneers, and the assertion, repeated so often and so loudly that England has induced almost every other country under the sun to believe it, that the whole root of the evil lay in the Irish character, in the natural inferiority of the Celt to the Anglo-Saxon, in the utter incapacity for progress, and the hopeless inability to help themselves, improve themselves, or govern themselves, inherent in this unfortunate race.

[...] Coming back to the particular wrongs of which I wish to speak—first, the wrong of English rule, as it exists in Ireland; secondly, the wrong of landlord rule, as it exists in Ireland.

[...] O'Connell and John Bright, in the days of the Anti-Corn-Law agitation, shared between them every epithet of opprobrium that liberal and conservative newspapers alike could find to hurl at their heads. So nowadays the land reformers who head the present agitation in Ireland are denounced as endeavoring to excite an agrarian rebellion, because one or two fools, in a crowd of twenty thousand farmers, cry out for shooting landlords. So the same old story is ever repeated; the same abusive language is showered on the head of every leader of every new reform; the same combination of stolid conservatives, timid liberalists and Laodicean "moderates," who like to be called reformers, but do not want to do anything or risk anything in support of their professed principles, is formed from age to age against the small phalanx of single-minded men, enthusiasts if you will, who have accomplished everything with any good in it, ever since the world began. Only a few weeks ago a gentleman, a lawyer of

intelligence, said to me, apropos of the land question in Ireland: “Are any of your family land-owners?” I replied in the affirmative. “Then,” he said, with an air of astonishment, not to say suspicion, “why do you and your family support the radical view of the land question?” I said—the only thing I could say—“Because we respect the laws of justice, and feel that it will be better for us in the end to follow them, though it may apparently be to our disadvantage now.”

[...] In America it is too often the case that it cannot be understood why a man should support a principle or advocate a reform based on abstract justice, unless he has himself an “axe to grind.”

[...] To return to my subject, however, it has been a matter of continual amazement to me to see how, on coming down to the concrete in Irish questions, the most puerile objections are invariably urged against arguments that have stood the brunt of thousands of years—ever since man had a history, in fact—and the most childish questions are asked, showing the densest ignorance, not only of Irish and English history, but of all history, by persons setting themselves up as judges on all points of conflict between England and Ireland, and delivering themselves of those questions with the air of having forever silenced their opponents thereby. One of the most stereotyped questions, the inevitable question, in fact, supposed to be unanswerable, is, “Why should not Ireland be as content to remain united with England as Scotland is?” This question needs only a perusal of the leading facts of Irish history for its answer. It is about as reasonable a question as if one were to ask, “Since a black cat and a tabby cat can get on very well together, why should not a cat and mouse?” It is not the aim of this pamphlet, however, to answer the question. Anyone who takes the trouble to study the impartial pages of Lecky, in his “England in the Eighteenth Century,” can find out for himself all the reasons for Scotland’s contentedness and Ireland’s discontentedness; but there is another stereotyped interrogatory, with which I propose to occupy myself now, and that one runs thus: “How is it that the farmers of Ireland are so miserable, while the farmers of England, with precisely the same system of land tenure, are so prosperous?” The equally stereotyped answer which the propounders of this question make to themselves, and one which no amount of reasoning or proof will drive out of their Protestant and Anglo-Saxon heads, is, “Because the Irish farmers are Celts and Roman Catholics, and therefore have all the vices; and the English farmers are Anglo-Saxons and Protestants, and therefore have all the virtues.” [...]

In judging of the effects of landlordism in Ireland there are two truths in political economy to be borne in mind. The first is, that the reason the evils of the landlord system have not been felt acutely until recently in a country like England, is to be found in the fact that industry and enterprise of every sort, untrammelled by hostile legislation from aliens, have been so flourishing that no large class of the population has been at any time thrown on agriculture for its sole subsistence. [...] A long series of iniquitous laws, which anyone who chooses may make himself acquainted with in any history of Ireland, have crushed out the industries and manufactures of the country, from its woolen and linen trades even down to its mining industries. It is true that most of the prohibitions placed on every branch of trade have been removed, but it will take many years of diligent fostering and liberal pecuniary aid from the Government, such as is bestowed freely on Scotch industries, but which Ireland unfortunately does not seem likely to get, to repair the mischief which has been done [...] The jealousy of English manufacturers is ever on the alert, just as much as it was seventy or 80 years ago, to nip in the bud all Irish enterprises. If a factory is started in Ireland, an English company at once steps in, buys it out, and then—quietly shuts it up. With the present small minority of Irish members in the House of Commons, systematically voted down by an immense majority of English and Scotch members leagued against them, there is always danger that the influence in Parliament would be sufficient to force through it some form of hostile legislation to crush any rising industry in Ireland that promised well and excited the fears of English manufacturers. Ireland will never be safe from such legislation till she has her own parliament.

[...] From these causes, therefore, it results that the Irish tenant farmer, if he gives up his land, has nowhere to turn for a living. He has had no means of acquiring capital, and such few avenues of labor as exist are already choked up. Emigration and the poor-house are his alternatives; what wonder if he sometimes resorts to assassination as a third alternative.

[...] The ablest authorities have come to the conclusion that there is but one remedy for this special form of Ireland's misery. It is the establishment of a peasant proprietary.

[...] Were the times more prosperous, or were the raising of cattle in Ireland still as lucrative as it used to be, the refusal of the tenants to pay exorbitant rents would of course be followed by whole-sale evictions. That method cannot now be adopted by the landlords. It no longer pays to raise cattle in Ireland, and the landlords will get more by accepting the

reduced rents the tenants have offered to pay, than by depopulating their estates, as they did in the good old times. Evictions, therefore, the great source of blood-shed hitherto, will be fewer than they ever were. [...] Once this truth has become firmly impressed on the landlord brain, it will be but a short step to passing a bill through Parliament for raising a loan to buy up the land in Ireland. Such a loan could be raised with the greatest ease. The purchase of the whole of Ireland would cost but little more than two or three of those little wars which England so delights in.

[...] One word before I finish, I would say to America. I would ask her to remember the words of Benjamin Franklin: "I found the people of Ireland disposed to be friends of America, in which I endeavored to confirm them, with the expectation that our growing weight might in time be thrown into their scale, and justice be obtained for them likewise." Franklin was wiser in his generation than the Know-Nothings and toadies of England of the present day.

[...] Meanwhile to the men and women who form the back-bone of this country—those who cling to the stern old political faith of Milton and Hampden, of Patrick Henry and George Washington—I appeal for sympathy for my prostrate country. To them I look for right judgment and for cheering words to the men who are conducting our life and death struggle inside and outside the walls of Westminster. [...] It will be an opportunity for nobleness lost to the greatest nation that has ever existed, if it refuses us now the easy favor of a little charitable speech.

NOTES

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CHAPTER 6

Mary Harris “Mother” Jones and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn: Radical Women of the Irish Diaspora

Rosemary Feurer

This chapter presents Mary Harris “Mother” Jones (1837–1930) and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (1890–1964) as articulators of a radical expression of the Irish Famine diaspora experience. Both women presented themselves as Irish-American rebels and rejected the conservative path of Irish assimilation in American society. Class and political experiences launched them into participation in a collective rebellion centered on labor struggles. They sustained their radical voice despite political repression and conservative institutional forces, including the “pure and simple” craft unionism that tamed the labor movement and especially male Irish trade unionists. These women exemplify a segment of Irish labor activists who rejected capitalist ideology, dominant racial hierarchies, and women’s subordinated position in the labor movement.

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Jones was the trailblazer, “the Greatest woman agitator of our time,” according to Flynn.¹ Jones and other Irish activists and the Irish rebellion itself inspired Flynn, who made headlines as a famous young soap-box agitator of the early twentieth century. Flynn became the leading woman activist in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), and the best-known woman Communist a generation later. Their speeches and written essays express ideas and rhetoric that contested capitalism and empire, and articulated an alternative language about “civilization;” an understanding they developed from their Irish identity, socialist doctrine, and a transatlantic dialogue. While they did not win these struggles against dominant institutions, their lives help us see the radical intergenerational legacies of the diaspora that are often lost in accounts of women’s history, labor history, and even the Irish diaspora history.

MARY HARRIS JONES: FROM TRAGEDY TO REBELLION

If Ireland’s famine memory is expressed as an indomitable will to survive, there is no better representative of it than Mary Harris Jones.² Her story still stirs people who hear how she transformed a series of tragedies, beginning with the Famine, into an iconic labor rebel persona. Born in Cork in 1837, and residing there until the age of 14 or 15 through the worst years of the Famine, Jones’ early experience ignited a crucial personal and political awakening. While she never discussed specific famine memory, she would have witnessed starved corpses carted off while food that could have prevented starvation was taken to the quays of the River Lee, right next to the butter market in the Shandon area near where she lived.³

Jones preferred to present herself as less a victim than a rebel. She chose to link her memories of suffering with traditions of Irish rebellion in her scant remarks of the Cork years. “My people were poor,” she writes simply in the first paragraph of her autobiography. She follows that with a statement that her father was from a long line of Irish rebels. Her speeches and interviews also followed this course. Explaining her steely purpose in taking on the hired mercenaries of the coal barons, she told a newspaper reporter in 1900, “My father was an Irish refugee and I think some of his rebellious blood must linger in my veins.”⁴ Designating her father as a refugee rather than a Famine immigrant was significant. For Mary, it justified her own path to becoming a labor agitator, connecting it to a communal Irish memory of suffering and political oppression. Like many Irish, Jones rarely mentioned the specific trauma of the Famine, though some of

the most passionate comments in her autobiography and speeches referenced the threat of hunger and death carts.⁵

Mary’s father and brother Richard left on the “coffin ships” of 1847 to Canada, went briefly to Vermont and then to Toronto, Canada, to work as railroad laborers and on other jobs. Mary, her mother, and two other siblings survived on their own in Cork and then joined them in Toronto in the early 1850s. How they survived is not known, though perhaps this experience was the base for her later conviction that women were the vital link in working-class community struggles. The Harris family was part of a growing Irish working-class community, one-quarter of the city’s population by 1851. Here again, Mary’s narration of her inclination toward rebellion was marked by sharp memories of class exploitation. As a teenager, she rounded up all the other Irish girls to protest at the home of a contractor for the Grand Trunk Railroad who had reneged on paying laborers, including her father, for their work.⁶

The family’s stress on education and her own abilities allowed Mary to be admitted to Toronto Normal School by the age of 20 so she could escape the job of servant that was the lot of most poor Irish women. Training as a seamstress, something likely begun in Cork, brought additional options. At school, she was defined by her Irish working-class status, recalled with a story about a prejudiced teacher whom she wanted to “lick” for making a “slighting remark about the Irish.” She made an impression with her rhetorical skills in school and watched debates at the nearby provincial parliament.⁷

Mary Harris migrated to Memphis, Tennessee, in 1860. There she married George Jones, a Welsh-American union iron molder. They started a family in the “Pinch-Gut” area, named for the emaciated look of the poor in that Irish neighborhood. Pinch-Gut was between the two forks of the Bayou Gayosa, which flooded regularly—and was the cesspool base for epidemics. When yellow fever struck the city in 1867, she recounted in her autobiography: “The rich and the well-to-do fled the city,” while “one by one my four little children sickened and died. I washed their little bodies and got them ready for burial. My husband caught the fever and died. I sat alone through nights of grief.”⁸

As a poor widow, Jones moved to Chicago, where she established a dressmaking business and sewed “for the lords and barons who lived in magnificent houses on the Lake Shore Drive.” Then the Great Fire of 1871 destroyed her business and made her homeless. She took shelter with other destitute in a Catholic church. Asked in 1909 to pinpoint the

moment she committed herself to a life of agitation she replied, “I first began to think of it after the great fire of Chicago, when I saw all the relief which had been sent (to) the distressed did not reach the source for which it was meant. Then I began to read and think of some plan to relieve the suffering which I saw everywhere about me.”⁹ Her reference may have been more direct than it seems: Chicago’s elite wanted seamstresses to take servant work in order to access relief funds sent from across the globe after the fire. It is not hard to imagine that Jones was one of the working-class women who led mass protest movements over the relief issue. This movement spearheaded a new, yet unnamed multi-ethnic working-class movement of the unemployed that initiated a cascade of rebellion followed by a violent employer reaction. This was the Chicago of the 1877 railroad strike, the 1886 Haymarket affair, and the 1894 Pullman strike, where police and military force against workers were emblematic of Gilded Age conflicts. These were considered great defeats for the labor movement, and in their wake, the American Federation of Labor and its craft unions retreated to a more conservative stance, refusing for example to back a Labor or Socialist Party. Jones, who became part of a radical wing of rebels, identifying as a socialist by the 1880s, took these defeats as a taunt, and for the rest of her life sought to make the labor movement a force for social transformation.¹⁰

Jones tracked her own life with the creation of the US labor movement, even adopting May Day, associated with Haymarket and a global workers movement, as her own birthday. She placed her famine, epidemic, and fire disaster experiences into a framework about breaking loose from power structures. “I belong to a class who have been robbed, exploited, and plundered down through many long centuries, and because I belong to that class I have an instinct to go and help break the chains,” she told a 1913 Congressional investigating committee.¹¹ This was a key theme of Jones’ speeches and writings, an explanation for her path from Ireland to the rebellious “mother” of the American working class. In a country with a multi-ethnic working class, this meant building solidarity across the many divisions of ethnicity, gender, and race, and making it the operating principle of the labor movement. Furthermore, it meant the rejection of an Irish identity without class. A story she told of her early years of agitation served up an explanation:

I remember, in Chicago, long before trade unions were recognized or romanced by the authorities we tried to hold meetings. One of the meeting

places was in a loft, and all of us had to bring candles. One night a big Irish policeman nabbed us coming out. ‘Go home,’ says he; ‘you’ve been plottin’ agin the Government. The Government is good enough to ye. If ye come here agin, I’ll break your heads’.¹²

Jones became famous when she connected her socialist philosophy to organizing and strike strategies that made her a sensation and then a folk hero. In 1897, coal miners launched a mass strike in the bituminous fields. Jones showed that organized mass action that involved entire communities could bridge ethnic, racial, and gender divisions to contest power effectively. This involved reworking women’s roles strategically. Jones initiated a house-to-house canvass by women, and suggested women should organize their own ranks in order to defy the injunctions (legal prohibitions) against picketing and marching: “shorten your skirts and march!”¹³ The *National Labor Tribune* called her a different kind of “new woman” ideal with “the gift of talking in that forcible manner that interests you the moment she enters into a conversation with you. To her, more than anyone else, the miners owe much of their success.” The newspaper subsequently declared that she would “go down in history.”¹⁴ The 1897 strike established the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), but Jones had called for a general strike in order to bring in the low-wage workers of West Virginia. Disappointed, she went back to mobilize for a socialist party and women factory workers, but she was drawn back to the coal fields in 1899. In a set of strike successes, she redeployed the same innovative strategies in Pennsylvania’s bituminous and anthracite fields, contributing to the UMWA’s membership growth to 300,000 by 1903. This made UMWA the largest union in the US—and the only major industrial union in the American Federation of Labor (AFL), largely a body of craft unions. The UMWA’s membership included immigrants and Black miners. In 1900, she agreed to organize West Virginia, and that initiated a series of brutal battles that made her a legend. Jones defied bayonets and injunctions, was charged with conspiracy, and spent months in prison without charge because of her power to stir workers to rebellion. In West Virginia, she was labelled the “most dangerous woman in America.” Her fame grew especially because of her fearlessness in West Virginia and Colorado, the sites of two of the bloodiest confrontations in US labor history. But it’s also clear that she was part of a union faction that sought to make the UMWA into a socialist base, a significant reason why operators reacted so vigorously.¹⁵

Employers recognized the power of Jones' speeches and organizing. They sought when possible to ban her from strike zones and used propaganda against her. Jones' speaking voice was reported to have been a commanding baritone that could carry to the farthest part of a crowd of thousands, and not a few listeners thought it was a mystical voice from Ireland. One reporter noted, “[h]er voice is low and deep, with an enticing tang of Cork about it,” with a musical cadence that drew her listeners into her perspective, even when her message was radical. Her sing-song prosody, in which she connected all her words together, stretching out some of the words and holding certain notes of words longer than others, has been shown in a recent study to indicate high scores on measures of empathy, both on the part of the speaker and the effect on the listener. “She is a wonder,” the poet Carl Sandburg wrote of Mother Jones during World War I: “Nobody else could give me a thrill just by saying in that slow, solemn, orotund way, ‘The Kaisers of this country are next, I tell ye.’”¹⁶

Her effectiveness as a speaker depended of course not only on her voice but her style. To some, the written versions of her speeches seemed rambling and unimpressive. But Jones' use of story-telling, her switch between first, second, and third person, and the way in which she positioned herself as prophet of her era held great power for her working-class audience, especially when combined with the context in which these speeches were delivered. Many in her working-class audience lived in fear of picketing and assembly. Working-class picketing since Haymarket and Pullman had been violently or systematically suppressed, and nowhere more forcefully than in unorganized mining camps. Her profane defiance of that order, coupled with her presentation as an older woman who might have been going to church, was designed to conquer and contest that fear and to normalize radical expression.¹⁷

Here is a brief example of the brilliance of that style in a speech that appalled the reporter who nevertheless remarked on how effective it was before her working-class audience:

An operator says to me: “Mother Jones, how many hours would you have the miners work, four?”

“Yes, four,” I answer.

“And what would be the pay?”

“... I’d have them paid all that the coal they mined was worth, deducting only running expenses.”

“But where would we get any profit then,” asks he.

“There wouldn’t be any profit for you,” says I, “unless you took off those patent leather shoes and put on rubber boots, stuck a miner’s lamp in your cap, tied a can of powder at your side, threw a pickaxe over your shoulder and went down in the caverns to dig like the rest, then you’d get what you earned.”¹⁸

The most important element of the exchange is that it carries forward her central premise that workers produced the wealth, but that power, not some natural order, left them poor. The power of this kind of agitation was noted by Military Intelligence agents who in 1917 remarked that miners could never “get over” Jones’ radical proposals for shorter hours.¹⁹

Jones brought a global perspective into her activism. “I am a citizen of the world,” she proclaimed and invited workers to see the larger relationship of capitalism’s history to their current status. She met with radicals from across the globe, and this made its way into her speeches and guided her activism. One can hear echoes of James Connolly’s call for a workers’ republic in some of her speeches, as well as the injunction that he famously planted on the *Workers’ Republic* paper masthead: “The great appear great because we are on our knees. Let us Rise!” While both cherished the establishment of a national government responsive to workers’ needs, they saw these developments as part of an effort of the rising of a global working class that would create the basis for a new civilization, not one limited to the US or Ireland. Connolly saw the empire as part of a larger capitalist power structure rather than in an Irish nationalist framework. Jones shaped the style of industrial union strategy that Connolly and later James Larkin would hone in the IWW and the Irish Transport Workers Union. While Connolly in the United States organized for the IWW, Jones thought the struggle for the American Federation of Labor (the federation of mostly craft unions focused on white male workers, but including the UMWA) was important. It was in a conversation with Jones that Connolly first reported he would return to Ireland. The fact that Jim Larkin invited Jones and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn to a speaking tour in the aftermath of the Dublin lockout of 1913–1914 shows that they understood that there were variations on this radical conversation, but that it was united by an attempt to build what Jones called a “labor trust” based on solidarity that could contest capitalist power.²⁰

Jones connected the Irish experience to the cruelties and laws she encountered. Discussing the Montgomery, West Virginia “coal miners

thrown out of their homes by the capitalist cannibals,” reduced to a “campaign on the highways,” she likened this to evictions in Ireland and suggested all were part of an imperialist political project. “I have never forgot it and never will” forget the “grinding the women and children down that amounted to the worst abuses” of the “constabulary in Ireland,” she told a reporter, comparing it to the abuse of women in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. She suggested that the laws that established Pennsylvania’s state police “came from Ireland,” and that these laws were designed to control rebellion. Additionally, she called the policemen “Cossacks,” referring to the Russian Empire’s soldiers.²¹

The lens of Ireland can be seen in Jones’ embrace of the cause of Mexican revolutionists from 1907 to the 1920s. While organizing Mexican and Anglo workers together to contest the copper corporations in Douglas, Arizona, in 1907, she witnessed Mexican revolutionary Manuel Sarabia arrested on behalf of the Diaz Mexican government. A US District Court indicted other revolutionary leaders in the months afterward. That led Jones to publicize the cause of the Mexican Revolution. It is fair to call her the most important leader of this effort in the early stages from 1907 to 1910. She argued that workers “should help purchase ammunition to chase the capitalists out of Mexico.” In fact, she testified before Congress about the role of US Fenians to justify her efforts on behalf of Mexican Revolutionists. She wanted US workers to understand how elite land grabs and empire were the reason that Mexican workers were streaming across the border as strikebreakers. In Texas, she suggested that “complaints here about Mexicans coming over here and taking an American’s job,” were short-sighted. “You voted for the pirates that went down into Mexico and took the land away from them. You gave the Mexicans hell, so he has the right to give you hell.”²² When she was asked by UMWA leaders to keep Mexican strikebreakers out of Colorado during the 1913–1914 strike, she crossed the border to meet with revolutionary Pancho Villa and declared the Mexican cause should be the cause of workers everywhere: “It’s the same fight those stalwart fellows are leading there that’s being carried on in Calumet, Michigan (iron range), in Colorado (coalfIELDS), in every place where private greed had extirpated human right!” She hinted that workers would be justified in sending the revolutionaries a machine gun that miners had commandeered from coal company mercenaries in West Virginia.²³

Some of these themes can be heard in the speech by Mother Jones offered here. The speech was transcribed by a stenographer hired by the coal operators, an indication that they were regularly spying on Jones,

something that came as no surprise to her or others. Her hour-long speech led to a unanimous strike vote for union recognition, an eight-hour day, an end to the company store and boarding houses and company doctors. By January 1914, military officials had imprisoned Jones without charge on the grounds that she provoked the worst tendencies of an immigrant working class that was inherently prone to violence. In March 1914, the speech was presented to a Congressional investigation by the coal operators as evidence of Jones’ dangerous role. This seems to be a theme anticipated in Jones’ speech itself, where she confronts the presumptions of authorities about the nature of immigrants, turns the tables on this perception, and indicts organized religion as well as the very premises of social Darwinism and worker violence.²⁴

Jones came to Colorado in September 1913 after having been part of a major campaign in West Virginia that brought the attention of the nation and the world to the violence that was part of the coal-extraction regime. Much of the speech was told in the prophetic voice that she deployed to steel the determination of the miners to confront their fears and prepare for a long siege in order to win against John D. Rockefeller, whom she comically referred to as Oily John, the richest man in the country and the kingpin of a system of power in the coalfields. The speech was made at the convention that launched the strike, to an audience of immigrants, mostly men, representing twenty-one nationality groups. This speech is limited in that it does not enable us to see that in practice she worked closely with women and children and felt they were strategic to the winning of strikes.

Jones knew that racist sentiment festered among Anglo immigrants, including the Irish, and she alluded to it when she began the speech by arguing that miners had to recognize how ethnic and racial animosity was the product of the “inhumane” spirit of the bosses, and should be overcome by all workers. In other speeches, Jones referenced race as constructed and pigmentation as the product of the sun and nothing else. “The colored man is not responsible for having a black skin. He didn’t make that skin himself. Nature did it, and if you were born where the colored man’s ancestors were born you would be black, too.”²⁵

Jones placed modern prejudice within a trans-historical context when she followed with a story she told often of Terence, the slave from antiquity. Terence (Publius Terentius Afer) was the Carthage slave whose master, a Roman senator, educated him, and, realizing his intelligence, released him from slavery, after which Afer produced comedies before disappearing from the historical record. Afer’s best-known play, *The Self-Tormentor*,

produced a sentence that Jones and other radicals have offered as the wisdom of the ages: “I am human, and I think nothing human is alien to me.” Jones (or the on-site stenographer) bungles the aphorism here, but in other speeches she rendered it more accurately. In this speech, Jones turned the ancient playwright into a class struggle warrior, suggesting to miners that victory against modern empire-builders might come through rejecting prejudice.²⁶ The lowly, and despised, had the potential for greatness. This “pagan” Terence here is the ancient sage with an Irish name, a cosmopolitan who represents the highest model of humanity, the one who calls from the past to denounce the social Darwinist present.

Certainly, Jones was not alone in this era in re-imagining Jesus through this lens as well. In socialist circles, biblical criticism and books such as Bourke White’s *The Call of the Carpenter* (1911) reconfigured Jesus as a plebian radical. Jones’ rejection of organized religion and her embrace of a radical Jesus figure led her to valorize Jesus or Terence equally, as rebels against empire and poverty. She called on her fellow Irish to look beyond the conservatizing influence of the Catholic or other churches. It is no accident that Jones’ speech referenced the Christ-child in the stable, the one who “didn’t get born in the place he wanted.” In other speeches, she reminded workers that “the world’s greatest agitator was murdered by the ruling class.” She ridiculed those who used religion as a palliative against the global class struggle. She often referred to clergy as the “sky pilots” who worked for the bosses instead of following Christ’s revolutionary teachings.²⁷

Much of the remainder of Jones’ speech was a prophetic portent of the danger that awaited the miners should they strike, and an invitation to be part of a historic moment. Jones noted that she had advocated a unified campaign between the northern and southern Colorado coal fields for many years, but the national union had opted for more limited campaigns. She is the prophet, the one they could trust for correct strategy. Jones uses the sacrifice of recent West Virginia battles that involved significant sacrifice. She also suggested that the miners had the right to arm themselves defensively against private guards and concludes this resistance is warranted by the coal operators’ violence.

When John D. Rockefeller testified before Congress in April 1914, he suggested that his anti-union position was a principle as great as that of the US Revolution, one that warranted violence. Asked if the principle would hold even if it led to the death of all his employees, he replied simply, “It is a great principle.” As Jones’ allies pointed out, Rockefeller was not jailed

(as she was) for such an incendiary position, even after his mine guards integrated with the militia and burned the Ludlow tent colony on April 20.²⁸ The deaths of eleven miners’ children in this incident (called the Ludlow Massacre) led directly to the Ten Days War in Colorado when miners and their allies routed the militia in a show of force that resulted in dozens of deaths. The miners finally surrendered to federal troops and were prosecuted relentlessly. Reporters referred to Jones as Rockefeller’s “chief tormentor” in the years to come but she could not bring back the forward momentum that the 1913 speech predicted.²⁹

Jones initially thought that, as a result of World War I and the need for coal and workers, labor rights and a challenge to imperialism could be achieved, but she was clearly mistaken. She continued to advocate strikes, including a general strike. She considered the achievement of the Mexican Revolution, the Easter Rebellion, the Indian uprising and Bolshevik Revolution, and general strikes as a new sign that a global workers’ movement might yet prevail after retrenchment. In Mexico in 1921, she was greeted with flowers up to her shoulders by workers who honored her role in their struggle. Jones lived long enough to see these hopes for a workers’ republic dashed. But her last words to a movie crew in 1930, who asked how she would like to be remembered, showed her continuous commitment to a radical perspective forged in the crucible of her youth:

I’ve been called a red, a radical, an IWW, a Bolshevik, and I admit to all they’ve charged me with. I’m anything that would change this moneyed civilization into a higher and grander civilization for the ages to come. And I long to see the day when labor will have the destination of the nation in her own hands ... and show the world what the workers can do.³⁰

ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN: AN IRISH REBEL LIFE

For Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, stories from Ireland fueled a sense that she was destined for rebellion. She was born in Concord, New Hampshire, in 1890, but for her, famine memory and rebellion were connected. One key story she related was that of her grandfather Tom Flynn, arrested for fishing in a river that was considered the landlord’s property. “Enraged because hungry people could not have the fish for food in a famine year,” he put lime in the water so that dead fish could “greet the gentry,” before fleeing to the US at age 16. When she was defending herself against accusations of subversion in the 1950s, Elizabeth suggested she “drew in a

burning hatred of British rule with our mother's milk," a sentiment she associated with a deep patriotism about the potential for dissent in the US. Both her parents were Irish nationalists and socialists and raised their children on songs and stories of Irish rebellion. For them, and for her, the campaign to make the US and Ireland into socialist republics grew from the same seeds.³¹

Flynn's mother Annie Gurley, who came from Galway to Boston in 1877, was one of 13 children in a family she described as "lace curtain Irish." Annie helped to sustain her family with skilled seamstress work. Her sense of her productive contributions to the family led her on a path to feminism that also influenced her daughter. She joined the Knights of Labor, which by the 1880s welcomed working-class women, whether or not they worked for wages, as part of the producing classes and supported policies such as equal pay for equal work. She joined Sinn Fein and the Irish Feminist Club in Boston. Elizabeth's father, Tom Flynn, from an activist Fenian family, grew up in Maine and went to work as a 10-year-old, where he also joined the Knights of Labor and through it campaigned against workplace injuries (which cost him eyesight in one eye) and poverty. While he managed to go to university for a time, he was forced to withdraw when his brother died. However, he had learned enough to become a skilled mapmaker. Tom's sympathies remained with manual workers due to his experience in quarry work. This was passed down to Elizabeth, making her comfortable around men who worked in dangerous jobs. His animus for British rule of Ireland led him to never say the word "England" without adding "God damn her!" Also passed down was an animus to organized religion; both parents became atheists.³²

Living with hunger and poverty, and observing conditions of the working class in the New England textile industry were among the strong recollections that fired Elizabeth's anger and radicalism. Her autobiography described "huge gray mills, like prisons, barracks like company boarding houses," the "terrible screaming" of a girl "scalped by an unguarded machine," an "old man weeping as they put him in a lock up as a tramp," as among the strong memories she carried for the rest of her life.³³ After 1900, when two summers' worth of contract work by her father went unpaid, the family descended into what Elizabeth described as "revolutionizing poverty." They moved to the Bronx, New York, to survive with her mother's sister, where they huddled in the kitchen for warmth. She recalled the Bronx as the place "you can see enough misery and poverty daily to make agitators of us all."³⁴ There, in an Irish and German

neighborhood, the family discovered the Socialist Party in 1902. Soon, as their conditions slightly improved, they hosted so-called kitchen meetings and attended others regularly. Elizabeth drank it all in.³⁵

Elizabeth’s speaking skills were already evident when she won an oration prize in grammar school for a speech advocating women’s suffrage. Like Jones, Elizabeth was thrilled to debate as a young girl, encouraged especially by her mother, who also gave Elizabeth and her siblings a steady supply of great literature to read. Unlike Jones, she honed debating skills in a systematic way in high school, a factor that influenced the more traditional style of her oratory and writing, as will be apparent in the contrasting writing styles of each woman in the excerpts included in this volume. Her political commitments led to an early soapbox oratory experience that catapulted her to fame when the writer Theodore Dreiser proclaimed her the “East Side Joan of Arc.” Dedicated to radical change by the age of 15, Flynn launched herself on the speaking soap-box circuit. She recalled in 1960 that she made the decision to leave school at age 16 because she felt that “socialism was just around the corner and I had to get into the struggle as fast as I could.”³⁶

Flynn’s growing notoriety in socialist circles led Ireland’s leading socialist, James Connolly, to seek her and the Flynn family out in 1907 when he moved to the Bronx as an organizer for the IWW. Flynn called that first meeting with Connolly “an unforgettable event.” Connolly had migrated to the United States with his large family in 1903, and in the midst of the struggle for a new kind of connection with the labor movement, he embraced the IWW with its program of direct action and industrial unionism and a focus on workers at the bottom of the labor hierarchy. Connolly was a significant influence on her for the next 3 years, bringing the broad perspective of a “travelling Irish” labor radical to her doorstep. They worked together to build the Irish Socialist Federation, which sought to recruit more Irish Americans to the US and global cause. Flynn left the Socialist Party while Connolly joined it and embarked on the 1908 Red Special Socialist Presidential tour with Mother Jones and Eugene Debs. Flynn explained later that her rejection of the SP was a factor of her youth: “We felt it was rather stodgy,” with its professional middle-class leadership and had “a desire to have something more militant, more progressive and more youthful.”³⁷

Historian Elizabeth McKillen has suggested that Connolly convinced Flynn “that anti-colonial rebellions were an important form of working class resistance to capitalist oppression.” But by Flynn’s own account, it

was a speech in the Bronx by Mother Jones that directed her to specific campaigns of anti-imperialist activism. In 1908, Flynn and Connolly listened to Jones' Bronx speech, including a harangue about the failure of New York's socialists to join the struggles against tyranny in the western US, Mexico, and Russia. Jones, Flynn reported, called the socialists of the east "white-livered rabbits who never put our feet on Mother Earth." Months later she joined Mother Jones at a meeting protesting the deportation of a Russian radical refugee from the US. Flynn soon was aiding Mexican revolutionaries and contesting US aid to the dictator Porfirio Diaz. She gave robust support to the revolutionary Flores Magón brothers, working for their release from US prisons, a cause that consumed a great deal of her time in 1909–1910. Her writings connected the land issue in Mexico to the Irish struggle against absentee landlords and even theorized that the best way to address interventionism was through a general strike. By direct action at the point of production, workers could halt the elite's march to war.³⁸

Flynn campaigned with western workers through her leadership of the IWW or Wobblies, whose goal of "one big union" she shared with Connolly. They sought to establish a new basis for organizing that harckened to the best of the Knights of Labor and their belief in the value of all productive labor, in contrast to the lines of skill, race, and gender operative in the AFL. They organized all immigrants (moving beyond the Western Knights of Labor's exclusion of Chinese immigrants), and welcomed African-Americans, and their ambit was a global network rather than a nationalist purpose. Flynn and the IWW were inclusive of Chinese immigrants and advanced their role in the IWW.

While Flynn's feminism made her eager to organize women, it was the Western campaigns of itinerant male workers that led to her rise in the IWW, especially through her organizing of the first of the free speech fights, which sought to break through the ban on assembly through employers' control of civic society. In Missoula, Montana and Spokane, Washington, she brought some women Wobblies into a strategic role despite their small numbers, even though the campaign relied mostly on male workers. These fights sought to open organizing in towns that banned union organizers and encourage direct action on the job. Flynn and others jumped on the soapbox and invited arrest, then recruited migratory workers to engage in mass action until they filled the jails to capacity. Similar battles were waged in 25 other towns and cities, with hundreds of arrests and tales of brutality and risk to life and limb. These

made them the stuff of songs and lore for decades afterwards.³⁹ The free speech fights strengthened Flynn’s commitment to the IWW. But the looming birth of her first child, coupled with her desire to divorce his father, led her to return east where her mother and sister remained a significant resource for child care while she continued her journey as a labor organizer. Like Jones, the phenomenon of a woman in this male-dominated organization turned heads, though in this case it was claimed that the turning was because of her “Irish beauty.”⁴⁰

Flynn thought systematically about the relationship between class and gender, and derived her positions from a careful analysis, including a reading of German socialist Clara Zetkin, who warned against alliances with “bourgeois feminists.” Strongly identifying as a feminist due to her mother’s influence, Flynn still felt class was absent from most feminist philosophical positions. Like Jones, she believed that women fared worse in capitalism. They both rejected the rising solution that advocated cross-class gendered alliances with wealthy and middle-class women to pursue women’s rights, as theorized by individuals such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Jane Addams, and organizationally through the Women’s Trade Union League (WTUL), established in 1903 as a federation of women trade unionists and their supporters. Flynn and Jones argued that middle-class, educated women would dominate the coalitions and steer them to compromises with capitalism. They felt that, confronted with class issues, the wealthy and middle-class women would choose their own class loyalty. They believed that working-class women had to build their own self-organizing capacity in class-based organizations. For Flynn, this position was reinforced by her sense that the WTUL was an AFL instrument to keep women from joining the IWW. Flynn rejected the alliance for suffrage with these women as did Jones on this basis. Flynn, in an essay, “Why Women in Industry Should Organize” harshly criticized the “rich faddists” directing the suffrage movement and who she felt were using working-class women in parasitic ways.⁴¹

Flynn was proud that at a theoretical level, the IWW sought to advance women industrially, through leadership in the labor movement. The IWW ceded the development of their policy on women’s issues to her, and she was the first to introduce the right to birth control and to push hard to open the doors to women.⁴² And in the Lawrence, Massachusetts 1912 textile strike, she came into her own along with the IWW on woman’s role in the union. In early 1912, when employers cut pay for working women after new laws required them to reduce hours, 10,000 workers struck.

Flynn was called in after the arrests of male Wobbly leaders and immersed herself in the multi-lingual (59 languages) immigrant networks to empower the strikers. The strike's focus was solidarity in the face of brutal police repression of mass picketing lines. The multi-ethnic solidarity of that strike was her shining moment, harboring the seeds of power through industrial unionism and positive attention to a global working class that disproved the AFL's contention that organizing skilled male workers was the only solid means to success. Employers' attempt to defeat the strike-through mass repression united the immigrant communities more thoroughly, especially women. "The IWW has been accused of putting women in the front. The truth is rather that the IWW does not keep them to the back and they go to the front," she commented at the time.⁴³

When the strike reached a crisis point, Flynn adapted a strategy used by European syndicalists, soliciting sympathizers to temporarily adopt strikers' children. Convoys of strikers' children were sent to New York, Barre, Vermont, and other locations. It was great publicity, as it revealed the terrible clothes on the backs of the children whose parents made cloth and textile goods. It also took a cue from Mother Jones' own march of the mill children to Wall Street in 1903, which dramatized child labor. The reaction of authorities forcefully blocking the children from taking the train served to aid the cause.⁴⁴

Flynn went from Lawrence to lead a dramatic strike of 6000 New York hotel and restaurant workers and a Paterson, New Jersey, strike of 25,000 silk workers in 1913. Despite her misgivings about cross-class coalitions, she agreed with the IWW leadership's acceptance of an offer of support for the strike from socialist bohemians in Greenwich Village. They staged the strike as a massive Madison Square Garden theater stage event, engaging thousands of workers in recreating scenes from the strike. Flynn, however, later regretted the way that the art detracted from the struggle, deeming it "disastrous to solidarity" in the face of terrific repression in Paterson itself. In the wake of Lawrence, Paterson bosses were better prepared to defeat the Wobblies, claiming them as "outside agitators." But more critically, management cut a deal with mostly native-born skilled workers, and this ultimately forced the unskilled workers to gradually return to work under pre-strike conditions.⁴⁵

It was in the heart of the radical moment, the Paterson campaign, that Flynn delivered a lecture that was later turned into the pamphlet *Sabotage*, a portion of which is offered in this volume as an example of her writing. Her speech was part of a defense of Frederick Sumner Boyd, a New York

City IWW member arrested for advocating that if silk workers in Paterson were forced to return to work, they should conduct job actions, including adding vinegar to impair silk looms. When the employers exploded with charges of “anarchist dynamiters,” the IWW pointed out that employers themselves regularly added chemicals, including lead to vats, a process they called—embarrassingly—“dynamiting silk.” The pamphlet was an attempt to reclaim the word sabotage and render it nonviolent. In it, she condensed a dialog that began with syndicalists in France and winded its way as a point of discourse through the United States labor movement, about the role of direct action on the shop floor in empowering workers.

Flynn presented sabotage as a non-violent and legitimate response to employers’ legal and police powers. Her presentation is a systematic and brilliant analysis of the role of law in making violence and sabotage acceptable if it was meted out through a system of property rights valorized in capitalism. Property rights allowed employers to kill workers by endangering them—sabotaging their job—without consequence, but abjured the use of property and knowledge by workers in defense of their rights. Using humorous and powerful anecdotes from across the globe, she suggested workers’ direct action on the job could turn the tables by using the collective knowledge of the work process and their own labor power. Flynn was careful to provide no example of violence in defense of workers’ rights. Her discussion of “working to rules book” showed that employees could affect the bosses’ bottom line by following management’s own written or verbal rules, by withdrawing their own knowledge from the work process. She argued that workscapes of collective misery could be transformed to advance workers’ interests.

In a 1915 interview, Flynn also connected sabotage to Irish history, reminding the reporter that when the Irish were “forbidden their immemorial right of fishing in certain rivers” the streams were poisoned, saying “if we can’t have our own, neither shall the English.” Of course, as noted above, her own grandfather had fled to the US after poisoning a landlord’s river as a young man. The reporter concluded that “antagonism to constituted authority seems inbred” in Flynn. The “weapons of the weak” were the stuff of family and folklore that made her see workers’ direct action in line with a long history of struggle.⁴⁶

Flynn soon grew to regret the publication of the pamphlet, because of the word, not the content. It became a tool used by employers and the government to label the IWW and Flynn as advocating violence. Some violent episodes of bombings from 1914 to 1916—though only one that

involved any IWW members—ramped up the focus on the IWW's sabotage position. These included the AFL craft unionists who had dynamited the anti-union *Los Angeles Times* building; the anarchists (including an IWW member) whose dynamite exploded an apartment building as they built bombs intended for John D. Rockefeller's residence; and the San Francisco 1916 preparedness parade bombing. Even if there were few actual acts of violence to prosecute, the IWW members were rounded up. In Everett, Washington, brutal violence against the IWW was blamed on them being potential saboteurs. Among those who toyed with rhetorical violence was Flynn's anarchist-syndicalist lover Carlo Tresca. But Flynn herself viewed violence as counterproductive and came to see it as part of a macho confrontational theater, not collective power. However, she distinguished this from defensive violence such as workers' defense against mine guards, or revolutionary moments such as the Easter Rebellion and Mexican Revolution.⁴⁷

Flynn soon recognized that she could not curate the word sabotage as non-violence. She urged the IWW to stop publishing her pamphlet to deprive employers and the government of using it against the union. Flynn had already been savvy enough to connect the Wobblies campaigns with free speech rights and felt that the use of terms like "open mouth sabotage," (instead of free speech on the job) was misleading. The IWW leader Bill Haywood refused her demand to take it out of circulation for 2 years. This added to Flynn's growing estrangement from the IWW; she let her membership lapse. Flynn later suggested that the writing was the product of "my young and hot-headed and heedless days," and she testified to the Subversive Activities Control Board in the 1950s that reading it, "I was embarrassed like a man of 60 might feel if he were confronted with a love letter that he wrote when he was 17."⁴⁸

Flynn's repudiation of her own writing was a consequence of the anti-labor and anti-radical repression that coincided with the US becoming a leading power of the twentieth century. Nationalist patriotism became an identifying point for the US workers' movement, rather than global solidarities and welcoming identification with traditions from across the globe. But something was lost by Flynn's repudiation of the arguments in *Sabotage*. The points Flynn made speak directly to issues of direct action as an aspect of the workers' movement—about what is produced and how it is produced, whether it is environmentally and safely produced—but were sidelined from the labor movement's concerns. The US labor movement

never regained the bold claims to ownership of their jobs and demands for workers’ control.⁴⁹

Before World War I (WWI), Flynn had written about the need to consider direct action at the point of production—and a general strike—as a means of obstructing war in Mexico and Europe. The factionalism of the labor and socialist movement led to a diminished capacity to confront the international crisis. The IWW grew during 1916–17 but was isolated from the AFL elements such as the Chicago Federation of Labor or the mine workers who both also strongly opposed WWI and imperialist intervention in Mexico. These divisions, as well as the strong influence of conservative AFL president Samuel Gompers, who had joined with employers in spying on anti-war activists, led mainstream labor to become incorporated into the US warfare state.⁵⁰

Still, as Elizabeth McKillen has argued, Flynn played a key role in transnational networks that supported the Easter Rising in the left-labor community, disagreeing with some in the socialist movement that it was a nationalist distraction from the class movement. She defended the Sinn Féin movement and believed that Connolly thought that the Easter Rising would lead to a workers’ republic. Connolly’s relationship with her family was so well-known that many Irish exiles sought her and her family out, even when more conservative Irish discouraged them from doing so.⁵¹ Flynn moved seamlessly between alliances with Irish exiles to the defense of Italian anarchists, playing a critical role in the development of the American Civil Liberties campaign to save the condemned Sacco and Vanzetti, and thereby helped to shape the new American Civil Liberties Union, of which she was named a board member.⁵²

Flynn retreated from activism in 1926, in the wake of a health and mental crisis, but re-emerged in 1937 and joined the Communist Party (CP). In her autobiography, she made a direct connection to defending James Connolly’s involvement in the Easter Rebellion of 1916 to arguing that Connolly would have thought the Soviet Union was in line with his own workers’ republic vision. She does not suggest that Connolly may well have realized in time that both the “dour and puritanical state” of Ireland as well as the Soviet Union were both a repudiation of his vision of the kind of global movement they and Jones had envisioned.⁵³

A deep discussion of Flynn’s CP years is outside of the scope of this chapter, but it is important to recognize that when she made the decision to join, she saw the CP as the vessel for some of the elements she had shaped in the early twentieth century as part of a transnational

conversation—a movement with global networks that played a vital role in building industrial unions, organizing sit-down occupations, and overcoming racial and anti-immigrant sentiments. This movement also helped build the new Congress of Industrial Organizations. But even while its leaders tried to claim that “Communism was Twentieth Century Americanism,” they could not escape the association with the Soviet Union that demanded fealty from its affiliates. To name just one example, she was expelled from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in 1940 solely on the basis of her CP membership. Flynn pointed out the hypocrisy of the ACLU’s position, which specifically had repudiated such litmus tests for membership and leadership in the cause of human rights. It was a signal for how nationalism and security interests would transform the potential for radicalism across the globe.

CONCLUSION

Both Jones and Flynn used a global lens, one that incorporated the Irish experience into a class-based vision of a workers’ republic. Both were brilliant speakers with styles and views that represented different aspects of the Irish voice, striking their working-class audiences as examples of the gift of Ireland’s migrant travelers to the world. They both were significant innovators of strike action and organizing and defense strategy. They saw the connections between the imperialism experienced by Ireland and other causes. The intergenerational comparison of the two shows a similar rejection of social Darwinist assumptions about human capacity, one they drew initially from the experiences of Ireland but expanded into a multi-ethnic cause. They both went to prison for their beliefs multiple times and inspired others to do so as well. They were part of a network of Irish American labor activists who took a radical path, considered themselves citizens of the world, and refused to see the Irish oppression as singularly about one country and one place in time. “I am a citizen of the world,” Mother Jones proclaimed to an audience in 1898, and certainly Flynn at the end of her life would have nodded in agreement with that sentiment. That citizenship meant a kinship between the struggles of workers across the globe. Without economic rights, citizenship and human liberation would be limited in Ireland, the US, and across the globe.

EXCERPT 1: "ADDRESS OF MOTHER JONES DELIVERED
BEFORE THE CONVENTION IN TRINIDAD, COLO.,
ON TUESDAY, THE 16TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, A. D. 1913,"
IN *CONDITIONS IN THE COAL MINES OF COLORADO PART 9*
EXHIBITS, ETC: HEARINGS BEFORE THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON MINES AND MINING, SIXTY-THIRD
CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION, ON JAN. 27, 1914.
(WASHINGTON, U.S.: G.P.O., 1914), 2630-35

...The question that arises to-day in the Nation is an industrial oligarchy. The workers are beginning to demand a fair and better condition. A strike, I know, is the very last resort. I am one who does not advocate them; I am one who has prevented many strikes throughout the country; but in Colorado it has been 10 years since you have submitted to this outrageous existence.

What would the coal in these mines and in these hills be worth unless you put your strength and muscle in to bring them out? A reporter for a Pittsburgh paper was once out here and was speaking to a manager of one of the C. F. & I. mines.⁵⁴ He asked why the place was not propped safely, and the manager very humanely replied: "Oh, damn it, dagos⁵⁵ are cheaper than props." ... What a horrible statement; what an inhumane statement to be made by any man. I want to say there are no dagos in this country... He is no more a dago than a Scotchman, an Irishman, or Welshman: he is immediately an American citizen, supposed to learn our laws and institutions and comply with them, and this thing of calling each other dagos—they used to do that thing in Pennsylvania: they used to go into the mines—the bosses used to—and they say to the Irish men, "Oh, hell. Pat. those Welshmen, but if you will put \$10 to me I will give you the best room."⁵⁶ "Well," he says, "I will give you \$ 10, sure." And then he would go to the Welshman and he would say to the Welshman. "Those damn Irish call you Welsh rabbits, but if you will put up \$15 I will give you the best room." "Well, all right, you can have the \$15." Well, then, they would go to the Irishmen and divide them on religion, and tell the Irishman that the Welshman was fighting him and they wanted to get rid of him—the Catholic Irish, and the Irishman would go home and say, "Mary, don't put the children in the school of the A. P. A.⁵⁷," and the A. P. A. would say "Don't put the children in the school of the Irish Catholic." [Laughter.] But it has been the game that has been played

down the history of the ruling class to divide the working class. The Italian is as dear to me as any other nationality in the world. The Polish is as dear to me. The Polish fellow didn't get a chance to be born maybe where he wanted to. He had to take what he could get. We have had no choice. Christ was born in a stable: He didn't pick the place where to be born at all; and this thing of terming a class "dagos," and all other phrases and names, such as the ruling class and their satellites have put into our minds, must stop... [Applause.] Away back in Rome, 200 years after Christ left the earth,⁵⁸ there was a pagan writer on the labor question as it was then. This man's name was Terence. The Romans went down in Carthage⁵⁹ and they arrested him. And they brought him with others into Rome. At that time whoever they captured had to be a slave; and if they themselves did not want to use him they sold him to someone else, so that when he came up to account for what he had done they said to him, "Who are you?" And this Roman, this pagan slave, said, "I am a man, a working man, a being, a man belonging to the working class. I am interested in anything that affects them," was the reply of this pagan slave. I am devoted to my class. I wish to God I could permeate every working man in the State of Colorado in the same way that permeated the heart and brain of this pagan slave 1,800 years ago. He was a man. Whatever affected the working class, his fellow men, affected him.

[...] We are making concessions, concessions, concessions; we have made them all along; we have suffered here for 10 years, and long before it. [...]

The time is ripe for you to stand together men and make the operators come through: and if you don't, who, by the eternal God, will? This thing of standing slavery in this county is going to end, I want to tell you, my friends; and if you men are too cowardly, there are enough women in this county to come in and beat the hell out of you. We are going to raise the coming children from slavery; we are going to raise them as citizens of this great Nation; we are going to raise intelligent law-abiding citizens, and we will take a hand in making the laws, and I want to tell you that we will elect the sheriffs. [...] There is philosophy in this thing statesmanship. It is not right for public officials to bring on turmoil, but if it is you who are to go into slavery or strike, I say strike until the last one of us drop into our graves.⁶⁰ [Applause.] I went into the State of West Virginia and I knew those boys of old. I met a woman and her babies—one tied on her back and the other under her arm and one in my arm—and we walked 12 miles in the midst of night before shelter could be provided for them. That was

here on the fair soil of America. If it was in Russia, we would rise up in arms against it.⁶¹ But it was right here in America. I knew these little trapper boys, and when I left there I said. "Boys, stand loyally together: I will be back again." I left there and came here. I had been in strikes of one kind or another all those 10 years and I had scarcely ever been out of a strike. When I took up the Butte Mountain paper one morning and looked at it and I said these boys must be saved if it costs me my life, and I took the train without ever consulting any officials of the miners. I landed at about a quarter of 5 in the morning in Charlestown and immediately went to the hotel. I then took the train at 8:30 and went down to Paint Creek and addressed a meeting. There I saw women that had been beaten to death: and the babe of the coming generation was beaten to death—murdered by the Baldwin-Felts thugs in the womb of their mother.⁶² That is in America, my friends, and I said, "I will never leave this State until the Baldwin thugs leave, too" and I didn't. I kept going around, and they killed some poor man every day, but I said to the boys be brave. [...] Three thousand men assembled in that city and we marched up with banners, with our demands upon those banners, and we walked into the state-house grounds, for they are ours and we have a right to take possession of them if we want to. [Laughter]. [W]e asked the governor to abolish the Baldwin guards. That was the chief thing I was after, and I tell you the truth, because I knew when we cleaned them out other things would come with it.⁶³

So I said in the article "we will give the governor until 8 o'clock tomorrow evening to get rid of the Baldwin guards, and if he does not do business, we will do business. [Applause.] I called a committee and I said. "Here take this document into the governor's office and present it to him. Now, don't get on your knees—you don't need to get on your knees. We have got no kings in America. Stand on both your feet, with your head erect." said I, "and present that document to the governor," and they said. "Will we wait?" and I said; "No; don't wait; and don't say 'Your honor.'" said I, "because very few of those fellows have any honor and don't know what it is." [Laughter.] When we adjourned the meeting and saw we were not going to get any help, I says: "We will protect ourselves and buy every gun in Charlestown." There was not a gun left in Charlestown, and we did it openly, no underhand business about it, for I don't believe in it at all. We simply got our guns and ammunition and walked down to the camps and the fight began. And I didn't let up until an extra session of the legislature was called. Several meetings were called,

but the mine owners broke them and there was nothing done, and the men and women were beaten up, and a Senator asked me why they shot. I want to say right here the man that won't protect his home and fireside against the Baldwin guard has no right on the soil of America. [Applause.] When I went to Cabin Creek there was a stone wall in Cabin Creek for 8 years, 9 years, and no organizer dared go up that creek; no one would dare break in it, for if he did he would come out on a stretcher or in a coffin.

One night two young lads came to me and they said, "Mother, will you do something?" They were trapper boys when I went in there before, and they were men (now), much like that young fellow that got on the floor here a few minutes ago, with the spirit of manhood in them, and they said, "Mother, we are in awful fear up in Cabin Creek; they exploit and beat us, and we are lobbed and have no happiness; will you come?" "I certainly will, boys," said I. But they said, "Mother, there is a stone wall, and they might shoot you." "Let them shoot," said I, "I would rather be shot fighting for you than live in any palace in America." [Applause.] [...]

When I was about to close that meeting, boys, I said, "Boys, let Mother tell you one thing," and they said, "What mother?" and I said, "Liberty is not dead, she is only quietly resting, waiting only for you to call," and that voice of fifteen hundred men rang the air, reached to Heaven, and they said, "Oh, God, Mother, call her, call her now." "Will you be true?" "Oh, yes, we will, Mother, be true. Will you come and organize us?" And I took them into the United Mine Workers with the militia there. They lost all fear, liberty began to take possession of their bosom, and they rose as one man; and I stood there and I organized them, and I said: "Put on your mine clothes tomorrow, go to work, do not say a word about this meeting, don't speak in the mines or anything. Put your mining clothes on and go back and don't make a bit of noise about it". They were discharged, of course, and the strike began. [...] And the superintendent came, and he said, "Mother Jones, I cannot let you hold a meeting here," and I said, "I am on the public highway," said I, "They belong to me—I have a share of stock in them." And I held my meeting anyway, finished, took my buggy, and there was never a shot fired or anything. Fear is the greatest curse you have got. I don't fear anybody, and I am going to say what I believe is right here below, and when I go up then I will render an account of it. [...] We drew the attention of the whole world—the whole civilized world centered its eyes on West Virginia. [...]

But you say you have been threatened by your masters. There ain't a fellow in God's earth I am going to obey when there is a crisis on. I am going to tell him to get out of the way. [Applause.] We'll get in the bull pen. There is nothing about that.

I was in jail. God Almighty, what if you do, you built the jail. [Laughter.] I have been jailed. I was marched 84 miles and landed in jail by a United States marshal in West Virginia in the night, and what did I do? Just talking to miners, to a meeting of miners, and I was taken up and put in jail, tried in the Federal court, and the old judge said: "Did you read my injunction?" "I did," said I. [...] A lickspittle of the court comes up, and he says you must say your "honor," this is the court, his honor on the bench, the fellow behind the counter with the mustache. And I says, "I don't know whether he has got any or not. Let me prove him up first."⁶⁴

He turned me loose, and asked me why I didn't take up charity work. "I don't believe in it." says I. "Don't believe in charity work?" "I don't believe in charity work, I think it is an insult to human reason. I tell you what I will do. There ain't a charitable institution in the world, under the sky, but what I would destroy to-night if I had my way about it." [...]. Now, let me say to you, keep away from the saloons, keep away from the pool tables, keep away from the gambling room. There is nothing in it for you. Let me say to you, get some good book, develop your brain and heart, be of service to humanity and your class, register yourself in the rights of humankind, be true to your fellow men, stand loyal to the cause of the workers, and no power on earth can dissolve... [Applause.] ... [Y]ou create the wealth, and I want to say to you this fight is going on, and if there is anybody going to keep it on, I am going to do it. [Applause.]

EXCERPT 2: FROM: ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN, *SABOTAGE: THE CONSCIOUS WITHDRAWAL OF THE WORKERS'*
INDUSTRIAL EFFICIENCY (CHICAGO: IWW PUBLISHING
 BUREAU, 1917), [2-18]

[...] We believe that the class struggle existing in society is expressed in the economic power of the master on the one side and the growing economic power of the workers on the other side meeting in open battle now and again, but meeting in continual daily conflict over which shall have the larger share of labor's product and the ultimate ownership of the means of

life. [...] The strike is the open battle of the class struggle, sabotage is the guerrilla warfare, the day-by-day warfare between two opposing classes.

General Forms of Sabotage

Sabotage was adopted by the General Federation of Labor of France in 1897 as a recognized weapon in their method of conducting fights on their employers. But sabotage as an instinctive defense existed long before it was ever officially recognized by any labor organization. Sabotage means primarily: *the withdrawal of efficiency*. Sabotage means either to slacken up and interfere with the quantity, or to botch in your skill and interfere with the quality, of capitalist production or to give poor service. Sabotage is not physical violence, sabotage is an internal, industrial process. It is something that is fought out within the four walls of the shop. And these three forms of sabotage—to affect the quality, the quantity and the service are aimed at affecting the profit of the employer. Sabotage is a means of striking at the employers profits for the purpose of forcing him into granting certain conditions, even as workingmen strike for the same purpose of coercing him. It is simply another form of coercion.

There are many forms of interfering with efficiency, interfering with quality and the quantity of production: from varying motives—there is the employer's sabotage as well as the worker's sabotage. Employers interfere with the quality of production, they interfere with the quantity of production, they interfere with the supply as well as with the kind of goods *for the purpose of increasing their profit*. But this form of sabotage, capitalist sabotage, is antisocial, for the reason that it is aimed at the good of the few at the expense of the many, whereas working-class sabotage is distinctly social, it is aimed at the benefit of the many, at the expense of the few.

Working-class sabotage is aimed directly at "the boss" and at his profits, in the belief that that is the solar plexus of the employer, that is his heart, his religion, his sentiment, his patriotism. [...]

Short Pay, Less Work. Ca Canny

Sabotage, as it aims at the quantity, is a very old thing, called by the Scotch "ca canny" [...] The Scotch dockers had a strike in 1889 and their strike was lost, but when they went back to work they sent a circular to every docker in Scotland and in this circular they embodied their conclusions, their experience from the bitter defeat. It was to this effect, "The

employers like the scabs, they have always praised their work, they have said how much superior they were to us, they have paid them twice as much as they have ever paid us; now let us go back to the docks determined that since those are the kind of workers they like and that is the kind of work they endorse we will do the same thing. We will let the kegs of wine go over the docks as the scabs did. We will have great boxes of fragile articles drop in the midst of the pier as the scabs did. We will do the work just as clumsily, as, slowly, as destructively, as the scabs did. And we will see how long our employers can stand that kind of work." It was very few months until through this system of sabotage they had won everything they had fought for and not been able to win through the strike. This was the first open announcement of sabotage in an English-speaking country.

[...] There was an Indian preacher who went to college and eked out an existence on the side by preaching. Somebody said to him, "John, how much do you get paid?"

"Oh, only get paid \$200 a year."

"Well, that's damn poor pay, John."

"Well," he said, "Damn poor preach!"

That, too, is an illustration of the form of sabotage that I am now describing to you, the "ca canny" form of sabotage, the "go easy" slogan, the "slacken up, don't work so hard" species, and it is a reversal of the motto of the American Federation of Labor, that most "safe, sane and conservative" organization of labor in America. They believe in "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work." Sabotage is an unfair day's work for an unfair day's wage. It is an attempt on the part of the worker to limit his production in proportion to his remuneration. That is one form of sabotage.

Interfering With Quality of Goods

The second form of sabotage is to deliberately interfere with the quality of the goods. And in this we learn many lessons from our employers, even as we learn how to limit the quantity. You know that every year in the western part of this United States there are fruits and grains produced that never find a market; bananas and oranges rot on the ground, whole skiffs of fruits are dumped into the ocean. Not because people do not need these foods and couldn't make good use of them in the big cities of the east, but because the employing class prefer to destroy a large percentage of the production in order to keep the price up in cities like New York,

Chicago, Baltimore and Boston. If they sent all the bananas that they produce into the eastern part of the United States we would be buying bananas at probably three for a cent. But by destroying a large quantity, they are able to keep the price up to two for 5c. And this applies to potatoes, apples, and very many other staple articles required by the majority of people. Yet if the worker attempts to apply the same principle, the same theory, the same tactic as his employer we are confronted with all sorts of finespun moral objections. [...]

Non-Adulteration and Over-Adulteration

[...] Interfering with quality can be instanced in the hotel and restaurant kitchens. I remember during the hotel workers strike they used to tell us about the great cauldrons of soup that stood there month in and month out without ever being cleaned, that were covered with verdigris and with various other forms of animal growth, and that very many times into this soup would fall a mouse or a rat and he would be fished out and thrown aside and the soup would be used just the same. Now, can anyone say that if the workers in those restaurants, as a means of striking at their employers, would take half a pound of salt and throw it into that soup cauldron, you as a diner, or consumer, wouldn't be a lot better off? It would be far better to have that soup made unfit for consumption than to have it left in a state where it can be consumed but where it is continually poisonous to a greater or less degree. Destroying the utility of the goods sometimes means a distinct benefit to the person who might otherwise use the goods. [...]

Interfering with Service: Open Mouth Sabotage

“Oh, yes, sir,” said the waiter. “It is the very best in the city.” That would be acting the good wage slave and looking out for the employer’s interest. But if the waiter should say, “No, sir, it’s rotten lobster salad. It’s made from the pieces that have been gathered together here for the last six weeks,” that would be the waiter who believed in sabotage, that would be the waiter who had no interest in his boss’ profits. [...]

The waiters in the city of New York were only about 5,000 strong. Of these, about a thousand were militant, were the kind that could be depended on in a strike. [...] [T]hey drew up affidavits and they told about every hotel and restaurant in New York, the kitchen and the pantry

conditions. They told about how the butter on the little butter plates was sent back to the kitchen and somebody with their fingers picked out cigar ashes and the cigarette butts and the matches and threw the butter back into the general supply. They told how the napkins that had been on the table, used possibly by a man who had consumption or syphilis, were used to wipe the dishes in the pantry. They told stories that would make your stomach sick and your hair almost turn white, of conditions in the Waldorf, the Astor, the Belmont, all the great restaurants and hotels in New York [...]

Following the "Book of Rules"

Interfering with service may be done in another way. It may be done, strange to say, sometimes by abiding by the rules, living up to the law absolutely. [...] For instance, on every railroad they have a book of rules, a nice little book that they give to every employee, and in that book of rules it tells how the engineer and the fireman must examine every part of the engine before they take it out of the round house. It tells how the brakeman should go the length and the width of the train and examine every bit of machinery to be sure it's in good shape. It tells how the stationmaster should do this and the telegraph operator that, and so forth, and it all sounds very nice in the little book. But now take the book of rules and compare it with the timetable and you will realize how absolutely impossible the whole thing is. What is it written for? An accident happens. An engineer who has been working 36 hours does not see a signal on the track, and many people are killed. The coroner's jury meets to fix the responsibility. And upon whom is it fixed? This poor engineer who didn't abide by the book of rules! He is the man upon whom the responsibility falls. The company wipe their hands and say, "We are not responsible. Our employee was negligent. Here are our rules."

[...] That book of rules exists in Europe as well. In one station in France there was an accident and the station master was held responsible. The station masters were organized in the Railwaymen's Union. And they went to the union and asked for some action. The union said, "The best thing for you men to do is to go back on the job and obey that book of rules letter for letter. If that is the only reason why accidents happen we will have no accidents hereafter." So they went back and when a man came up to the ticket office and asked for a ticket to such-and-such a place, the charge being so much, and would hand in more than the amount, he would be told, "Can't give you any change. It says in the book of rules a

passenger must have the exact fare." This was the first one. [...] Then when the train was supposedly ready to start the engineer climbed down, the fireman followed and they began to examine every bolt and piece of mechanism on the engine. The train stood there about an hour and a half. [Passengers] proceeded to leave the train. They were met at the door by an employee who said, "No, it's against the rules for you to leave the train once you get into it, until you arrive at your destination." And within three days the railroad system of France was so completely demoralized that they had to exonerate this particular station master, and the absurdity of the book of rules had been so demonstrated to the public that they had to make over their system of operation before the public would trust themselves to the railroad any further. [...]

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn 1955, *The Rebel Girl: An Autobiography, My First Life (1906–1926)* (New York: International Publishers), 88.
2. Cormac Ó Gráda 2001, "Famine, Trauma and Memory," *Béaloideas* 69, 121–43.
3. Elliott Gorn 2001, *Mother Jones, The Most Dangerous Woman in America* (New York: Hill & Wang), chapter 1.
4. Mother Jones 1924, *Autobiography of Mother Jones* (Chicago: Charles Kerr), 11; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (1 Jun. 1913): 33; *Charleston News and Courier* (15 Jun. 1900): 5.
5. Many Irish made the claim of being from a line of rebels, thereby hiding the Famine as the reason for their immigration. Biographer Elliott Gorn has found no evidence for Jones' claims that her father escaped due to rebellion. But he suggests her grandfather may have been tied to the Whiteboy rebellion of 1822 in County Cork.
6. *Wilkes-Barre (Penn) Record* (22 Feb. 1901): 5; *San Jose Evening News* (26 Aug. 1902): 6; *Arizona Republican* (17 July 1907): 5.
7. *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (13 Oct. 1914): 11
8. Gorn, *Mother Jones*, 38; Jones, *Autobiography*, 8.
9. Jones, *Autobiography*, 10; *San Antonio Light and Gazette* (20 Aug. 1909): 1
10. John B. Jentz and Richard Schneirov 2012, *Chicago in the Age of Capital: Class, Politics, and Democracy during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press), chapter 5. See also James Green 2006, *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement, and the Bombing that Divided Gilded Age America* (N.Y.: Penguin); Richard Schneirov, Shelton Stromquist and Nick Salvatore, eds.,

1999, *The Pullman Strike and the Crisis of the 1890s* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press).

11. U.S. Senate Commission on Industrial Relations 1916, *Final Report and Testimony*, 64th Cong., 1st sess., S. Doc. 215, vol. 11, 10,620.
12. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (1 Jun. 1913): 11. A synopsis account of the Irish role in the labor movement can be found in David Brundage, 2017 “Irish American Working Class,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*, (online), accessed 26 Jun. 2022. <https://oxfordre.com/americanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-461>; Peter D. O’Neill 2017, *Famine Irish and the American Racial State* (New York: Routledge) argues that a trans-atlantic context shaped the role of the policemen and others who contested Jones’ views.
13. *Pittsburgh Post* (3 Aug. 1897): 9; *Chicago Chronicle* (4 Aug. 1897): 2.
14. *National Labor Tribune* (26 Aug. 1897), n.p.
15. *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (31 Aug. 1897), 3; Gorn, *Mother Jones*, chapters 2–5.
16. Allison Bond, “Sing-Song Speakers Score Highly on Measures of Empathy,” *Scientific American*, (online), accessed 21 July 2021. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/attuned-to-feelings/>; *Rockford Morning Star* (7 Dec. 1930): 1; *Salt Lake City Tribune* (13 Jun. 1913): 11; *Oregon Daily Journal* (3 Jun. 1913): 8.
17. Mari Boor Tonn 1992, “Effecting Labor Reform through Stories: The Narrative Rhetorical Style of Mary Harris ‘Mother’ Jones,” in *Constructing and Reconstructing Gender*, ed. Linda A.M. Perry, Lynn Turner, and Helen Sterk (New York: SUNY), 283–93.
18. *New York World* (14 Aug. 1902): 6.
19. Case File, 8000-364074, 35, Roll # 801.Old German Files, Bureau of Investigation, National Archives.
20. *The Kansas City Journal* (11 Oct. 1898): 3; *Workers’ Republic*, 1898; C. Desmond Greaves 1971, *The Life and Times of James Connolly* (London: Lawrence & Wishart): 230; O’Neill, *Famine Irish and the American Racial State*, chapter 7.
21. *Worker* (28 Sep. 1902): 1; *Pottsville Evening Herald* (27 Aug. 1910): 1; *Brainerd (MN) Daily Dispatch* (10 Apr. 1912): 2. Jim Larkin to Labane, 1 Jul. 1914, Case Number 161336, Reel M1085, 173, Old German Files, 1909–21, National Archives and Records Administration.
22. For how Jones stood out on the issue of Mexican Americans compared to the Western Federation of Miners leadership in that strike, see Katherine Benton-Cohen 2011, *Borderline Americans: Racial Division and Labor War in the Arizona Borderlands* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press); the basic story is covered in Gorn, *Mother Jones*, 157, but the Fenian con-

nection is not. It is found in the “Congressional testimony. Statement of Mrs. Mary Jones, Testimony Before Committee on Rules, House of Representatives on H. J. Res. 201 Providing for a Joint Committee to Investigate Alleged Persecutions of Mexican Citizens by the Government of Mexico, Washington, D.C., June 14, 1910,” in Philip Foner 1983, *Mother Jones Speaks* (New York: Pathfinder), 371–74. See also *El Paso Herald* (3 Jan. 1914): 6a. The project led to Jones’ association with feminist revolutionaries Andrea and Antonia Villareal. See *Houston Chronicle* (19 Aug. 1909).

23. *Chicago Day Book* (16 Jan. 1914): 15. Later, when Jones was placed for months in prison without charges, under the Colorado Governor Elias Ammons martial law order, Pancho Villa refused to release a landowner whom he was holding after he captured portions of Chihuahua Mexico, telling Pres. Wilson he would exchange the landowner if the U.S. would grant Jones’ release. Jones treasured the telegram.
24. Most authors of the Colorado strike and Ludlow Massacre have overlooked Jones critical role, despite the fact that the operators focused on George McGovern’s classic *The Great Coalfield War* (1996) which does not take her role seriously.
25. Edward M. Steel 1988, *The Speeches and Writings of Mother Jones* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press), 220.
26. The actual excerpt from Terence is “Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto.” This means “I am a human; nothing human is alien to me.” Heralded as a poet of the African diaspora, Terence’s words have been repeated by Thomas Paine, Karl Marx and more recently was listed as the favorite aphorism of Maya Angelou.
27. Dave Burns 2013, *The Life and Death of the Radical Historical Jesus* (NY: Oxford University Press); Philip Foner, *Mother Jones Speaks*, 207, 340, 593, 601, 613, 629, 652
28. *Congressional Record*, 63d Cong. 2nd Sess. (April 29, 1914), 7441.
29. Thomas G. Andrews 2008, *Killing for Coal: America’s Deadliest Labor War* (Harvard University Press), chapter 13; *New York Tribune* (20 May 1914): 18.
30. Film footage of statement in Feurer possession, and posted at <https://www.motherjonesmuseum.org/aboutus>.
31. Flynn, *Rebel Girl*, 25, 231, 23.
32. Lara Vapnek 2015, *Elizabeth Gurley Flynn: Modern American Revolutionary* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press), 9; Helen Camp 1995, *Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and the American Left* (Washington: Washington State University Press), chapter 1. Elizabeth idealized the Irish role in building the Knights of Labor, leaving out the anti-Chinese aspect of the Irish immigrant experience in the West. There were few Chinese immigrants in Massachusetts

and Maine, so this was not part of her parents’ experience. But Tom Flynn recognized that the Irish claim to white citizenship led many to abandon the “Irish traditions of struggle for freedom!” See Flynn, *Rebel Girl*, 32.

33. Rosalyn Baxandall 1987, *Words on Fire: The Life and Writing of Elizabeth Gurley Flynn* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), 1–2.
34. *The Spokane Press* (10 Dec. 1909): 1.
35. Flynn, *Rebel Girl*, 33–44; Baxandall, *Words on Fire*, 3.
36. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn 1977, *Memories of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a presentation at Northern Illinois University, 1962* (New York: American Institute for Marxist Studies), 3; Vapnek, *Elizabeth Gurley Flynn*, chapter 2; Flynn, *Rebel Girl*, 61.
37. Flynn, *Rebel Girl*, 73. Peter D. O’Neill 2017, “Traveling Irishness and the Transnational James Connolly,” in Marguérite Corporaal and Christina Morin (eds) *Traveling Irishness in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 126; Flynn, *Memories*, 4.
38. Flynn, *Rebel Girl*, 88–92.
39. Vapnek, *Elizabeth Gurley Flynn*, chapter 2; Mary Ann Trasciatti 2018, “Sisters on the Soapbox: Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Her Female Free Speech Allies,” *Humanities* 7, no. 3: 69.
40. Baxandall, *Words on Fire*, 2–6; Flynn, *Rebel Girl*, 53–55, 73.
41. Vapnek, *Elizabeth Gurley Flynn*, 18; Flynn 1911, “Why Women in Industry Should Organize”, in Rosalyn Baxandall (ed.), *Words on Fire*; Flynn, *Rebel Girl*, 55–58.
42. Vapnek, *Elizabeth Gurley Flynn*, 17, 38, 52.
43. See Elizabeth Gurley Flynn 1987 “IWW and Women” in Baxandall, *Words on Fire*, 104–109; Ardis Cameron 1995, *Radicals of the Worst Sort: Laboring Women in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1860–1912* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press).
44. Cameron, *Radicals of the Worst Sort*, 140–42.
45. See Trasciatti, “Sisters on the Soapbox”; Vapnek, *Elizabeth Gurley Flynn*, 48–49.
46. *Omaha Daily Bee* (16 Dec. 1915): 8; James C. Scott 1985, *Weapons of the Weak : Everyday Forms Of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press) tracked the way that peasant villagers challenged imperialist power through surreptitious resistance, but here Flynn sought to understand how weakness could be transformed into an overt, collective and modern way of empowering workers.
47. Vapnek, *Elizabeth Gurley Flynn*, chapter 4.
48. Flynn, *Memories*, 36.
49. Scholars continued to investigate clandestine worker on-the-job strategies, but did not make the bold claim that these were morally legitimate. See Stanley B. Mathewson 1931, *Restriction of Output among Unorganized*

Workers (New York, Viking Press); Elton Mayo 1933, *Human problems of an Industrial Civilization* (New York: Macmillan & Co.).

50. Elizabeth McKillen 2013, *Making the World Safe for Workers: Labor, the Left, and Wilsonian Internationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press) makes a case that the centers of labor's dissent to the war were more powerful than generally acknowledged.
51. Flynn, *Rebel Girl*, 275.
52. Elizabeth McKillen 2016, "Divided Loyalties: Irish American Women Labor Leaders and the Irish Revolution, 1916–23", *Éire-Ireland*, 11, nos 3 & 4: 165–87; Mary Anne Trasciatti 2016, "Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the Sacco–Vanzetti Case, and the Rise and Fall of the Liberal–Radical Alliance, 1920–1940", *American Communist History*, xv, no. 2: 191–216; Niall Whelehan 2020, "Sacco and Vanzetti, Mary Donovan and Transatlantic Radicalism in the 1920s," *Irish Historical Studies*, 44, no. 165: 131–46.
53. Flynn, *Rebel Girl* 212–18, and McKillen, "Divided Loyalties." Of course, that was the path for James Larkin, whom Flynn defended in the US as well.
54. Colorado Fuel and Iron, with dominant interest owned by the Rockefeller family.
55. Dagos is a derogatory name for Italians.
56. The best room in room and pillar method of coaling was the one where coal was easiest to bring down and load, for various reasons.
57. American Protective Association, whose purpose was to exclude immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. In an earlier period, its focus was on Irish immigrants.
58. Terence (Publius Terentius Afer) was likely born 195 BC, not 200 years after Jesus Christ. See essay for further explanation of this passage.
59. Carthage was the seat of the Punic empire which fell to Rome in the second century B.C. It is now part of Tunis, capital of Tunisia. Here Mother Jones is suggesting that those who have been arrested might not have to be ashamed, a theme that runs through much of her speeches. Scholars believe Terence was brought to Rome as a slave by a Roman senator Terentius Lucanus who educated him and freed him. In other versions of this story about Terence, Jones makes it clear that he is an African slave.
60. Newspaper accounts added these lines after this sentence: "Strike and stay with it as we did in West Virginia. We are going to stay here in southern Colorado until the banner of industrial freedom floats over every coal mine. We are going to stand together and never surrender" *Denver Express* (17 Sept. 1913).
61. Jones is referencing West Virginia in the period 1901–2 when she initially went to organize there. She faced bayonets and injunctions, and that was when she was labelled the most dangerous woman in America.

62. The Baldwin-Felts guards were the private security for coal operators; they were notorious promoters of violence. The main goal was to instigate violence so that the operators could get anti-strike injunctions. They originated in West Virginia but were also brought to the Colorado fields. Here Jones is referencing the most recent mine war in West Virginia, Paint Creek/Cabin Creek, when she came from Butte Montana after reading of the terrorism of the Baldwin Felts private guards. She would end up in military prison on charges of murder. This brought attention of the nation to the private guard terror meted out to miners in West Virginia. As explained in the essay, Jones is using her prophetic voice to suggest that the miners had a chance if they were brave enough to meet the challenge as the miners were in West Virginia. They might give their lives, but it would be change from the near slavery they currently endured.
63. Notably, a portion of a transcript was left out of the operators’ exhibit, though it is retained in the union version of the speech. It is likely that this was left out because it clarified Mother Jones’ point that while she did not advocate fighting public police forces with weaponry, she felt the miners had every right to combat the hired guards who threatened them.
64. This is a reference to federal district Judge John Jackson, who issued the 1897 injunction, and then reinforced it specifically against Mother Jones in 1902 in West Virginia. This was called the Mother Jones injunction at the time. When Jackson died in 1907 on Labor Day, papers across the nation covered the event as a signal that Mother Jones had outlived him. Jones was renowned for tearing up or throwing injunctions against labor in the trash.



CHAPTER 7

Kate Kennedy, Irish Famine Refugee and American Feminist

Peter D. O'Neill

Kate Kennedy is one of the most politically effective women in nineteenth-century America. Yet, apart from a coterie of academic specialists, few are likely to have heard of her. Born in Ireland in 1827, Kennedy suffered greatly through the first years of the Great Hunger that devastated her homeland between 1845 and 1852. In 1849, she fled with her family to the United States. A principal and teacher in her adopted state of California, Kennedy worked within a public school system that not only discriminated on account of sex, but also segregated on account of race and ethnicity. Kennedy also enjoyed the comfortable lifestyle of the Bay Area bourgeoisie. Yet through political activism and written polemics, she agitated for change. Over the years, Kennedy compelled California to enact a statute promising women equal pay for equal work, ran for statewide office, and secured tenure for teachers. She gave vocal and financial support to the socioeconomic movement founded by Henry George, and she penned

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essays in which she confronted the racialized lines drawn by the dominant populace even as she espoused populist ideas.

Today, more than a dozen decades after her death, Kate Kennedy's legacy remains largely underappreciated.¹ A San Francisco school and a club for women teachers are all that were named in her honor, and the latter is defunct. Kennedy thus is one of the many remarkable women whom patriarchal historiography has managed to obscure. One of the many significant aspects of the rise of gender studies has been the unearthing of these women. This chapter tells Kennedy's story in the hope that she too will win the recognition she amply deserves.

EARLY LIFE IN IRELAND

Kate Kennedy was born in Gaskinstown, County Meath, on May 31, 1827, the second-eldest of seven children born to Thomas Kennedy and Eliza King Kennedy. Both parents held a keen interest in politics, according to Kate Kennedy's niece, Alice Clare Lynch. In a family biography published in 1935, Lynch writes that Thomas Kennedy "was a man of strong convictions which he expressed freely, regardless of consequences, and his life was a constant protest against injustice and oppression."² The parents were far from poor; rather, they "belonged to the class known as gentlemen farmers, and were socially well-connected with the leading farmers of the County."³ Kate Kennedy's childhood studies thus included French, Italian, and Spanish, learned while she attended the Sisters of Loreto Convent in Navan. Opened in 1833, the Loreto was one of a number of Catholic grammar schools established soon after Catholic Emancipation.⁴

The family fortunes took a downward turn in the girl's thirteenth year. Kennedy's father died, and her grandfather proceeded to claim landholdings that Kate's widowed mother, Eliza, believed to be hers. Favoring the families of his three daughters to that of his deceased son, Eliza's father-in-law disinherited her and his seven King Kennedy grandchildren: Patrick, at fourteen the eldest child, followed by Kate, Anne, Alice, Mary, Lizzie, and Delia.⁵ Kate left the Loreto after she turned fourteen, and her mother entrusted the younger girls' education to her; each learned at least one language besides English, as well as needlework and other skills.

Despite the great reduction in income that followed Thomas Kennedy's death, the family remained relatively well off, and very well versed in politics. Eliza Kennedy subscribed to *The Nation*, newspaper of the militant

Young Ireland movement founded in the early 1840s, and Kate took pleasure reading its contents to her siblings and neighbors.⁶ On August 15, 1843, the family went to the Hill of Tara—conveniently adjacent to their farm—to attend a rally where Daniel O’Connell advocated repeal of the Act of Union of 1801, which had joined Ireland to Britain. Drawing from memories passed on by her mother, Alice Kennedy, and uncle, Patrick Kennedy, Lynch vividly recounts the famous event known as the Monster Meeting, which attracted hundreds of thousands of people.⁷ The “demonstration made a deep impression on the young Kennedys who were present but could not get near enough to hear the orator,” Lynch writes. “There were many floats and bands of music, and with green flags waving everywhere and the sun shining over all it made a dazzling spectacle and one not soon forgotten. All roads leading to Tara Hill were crowded with vehicles of every description and throngs of people who were determined not to miss the great sight.”⁸ O’Connell’s oratory failed to hasten repeal, and the movement foundered with the onslaught of the Great Famine 2 years later.

County Meath had its share of starvation, disease, and eviction during these years. Although the Kennedys still ate well, they encountered scenes of distress that, as Lynch puts it, left “their hearts torn by the misery they saw all about them and filled with indignation that such things could happen in a so-called Christian land.”⁹ The reference to religion is significant. During the Famine, a number of Irish priests, echoing sentiments advanced by the English, claimed the disaster as an act of God sent to punish a sinful people. Kennedy’s later writings reveal her outrage at the claim; in her view, the Famine was nothing more than a man-made disaster perpetrated by an incompetent and callous British colonial administration blindly adherent to laissez-faire economics.¹⁰ The priests’ embrace of divine-punishment sentiments also voiced by Anglo counterparts drove Kennedy to leave the Catholic Church forever, a stance that set her apart from members of her immediate family and most other Famine refugees.¹¹

TRANSATLANTIC EXODUS

Politically, the family had pinned its hopes on the Young Ireland movement. Patrick went so far as to risk jail by hiding weapons intended for the impending revolution.¹² So when the Young Ireland rebellion of 1848 failed utterly, the disheartened Kennedys decided to flee while they still could. On April 1, 1849, Patrick, Kate, and Alice, aged twenty-three,

twenty-two, and sixteen, began the long journey to New York. In Dublin, “they took passage on a steamer to Liverpool, and then boarded the sailing ship *Caleb Grimshaw* which landed them in the big city after a pleasant voyage lasting thirty days.”¹³ The three worked—Kate and Alice in the needle trades—and saved their earnings. Two years later, at the grand age of forty-five, Eliza Kennedy joined her four other children, and hundreds of thousands of other Irish, in the transatlantic Famine exodus to America.¹⁴ By 1856, the entire family had moved across the country and into their new home at 1006 Clay Street, a location then and now in the heart of downtown San Francisco.¹⁵

A city of ramshackle structures that perched on hills looking out toward ocean vistas, San Francisco must have seemed chaotic to these migrants from New York. It had become a city almost overnight following the 1848 discovery of gold in the nearby Sierra foothills. Most gold-seekers set foot in California via the wharves of San Francisco, and its pleasant situation encouraged many to stay. The vast majority of Irish transplants had not come directly from Ireland, but rather from the eastern United States, like the Kennedys, or from Australia.¹⁶ In 1850s San Francisco, James P. Walsh writes, “Everyone was uprooted, Americans and foreigners alike.”¹⁷

Like every other major United States urban area, 1850s San Francisco was a cauldron of tensions: members of one group held themselves apart from others, based on traits like country of origin, sex or gender, race or ethnicity, education, and class. “Anti-Catholic and anti-Irish feeling seethed” among the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant ruling elites, notes historian Kevin Starr.¹⁸ Still, compared with many others, Irish newcomers enjoyed certain advantages. As Walsh notes, the Irish often already had experience living in urban settings, “a characteristic not shared by other Americans.”¹⁹ These Irish also had greater familiarity with the English language than other immigrants. The Catholic religion of most of these Irish had roots in California that dated back to Spanish colonization,²⁰ and while the nativist press frequently targeted the religion of the Irish, many Protestants saw Roman Catholicism as preferable to non-Christian beliefs of another burgeoning immigrant group, the Chinese.²¹ What is more, the Irish, unlike their Chinese neighbors, were classified as white by law.²² Indeed, US state apparatuses became vehicles for the Irish assimilation.²³ R.A. Burchell thus writes that in Pacific cities like San Francisco, “the effect and force of nativism,” an ideology that still was fueling anti-Irish discrimination back East, “were much blunted.”²⁴

The Kennedy family provides a good example. The indomitable Eliza King Kennedy, who had instilled in her children an intellectual rigor that eased their adjustment to new surroundings, reigned as the matriarch of a large and close-knit California-Irish family until she passed away at the age of eighty-three. Son Patrick died a wealthy businessman, and daughters Alice, Anne, Delia, and Lizzie married successful business leaders and property owners.²⁵ Three of Eliza's daughters entered the teaching profession, not least among them Kate Kennedy, whose estate, which would be valued in the millions of dollars today, included a good deal of property in both San Francisco and Oakland, as well as a raisin ranch in Fresno.²⁶ Fascinating glimpses of the family's bourgeois life may be found in the diary that Alice Kennedy kept—written entirely in French to enhance her proficiency in the language—from 1857 to 1865.²⁷ It depicts marriages and christenings, as well as trips to the theater and soirées with well-to-do friends and family, and it makes clear that the Kennedys' circle extended well beyond Irish Catholic society. Alice reports attending an 1860 sermon by the influential Unitarian minister, Thomas Starr King, for example, and she attended Mass not in chapels favored by other Irish immigrants, but rather in l'Église Notre Dame des Victoires, established in 1856 to serve San Francisco's French Catholics. It performs that function still.

Lives of Irish like the Kennedys contrasted starkly, moreover, with the lives of members of another major immigrant group, the Chinese. Antagonisms between San Francisco's Irish and Chinese during this period played a definitive role in the Americanization of the California Irish. As I have written elsewhere, Irish workers who loathed the WASP elite's attacks on their religion, and supposedly wild ways, in turn attacked Chinese workers as a means of demonstrating their whiteness.²⁸ At the forefront of anti-Chinese agitation was the Workingmen's Party of California, a political group dominated by the Irish and led by Denis Kearney, born in Ireland roughly 20 years after Kate Kennedy, who had arrived in San Francisco about a decade after she did.²⁹

The anti-Chinese movement ignited in the Sierra gold fields, caught fire in San Francisco, and spread East, resulting in Congress' enactment in 1882 of an Exclusion Act that drastically reduced Chinese immigration. The message of the 1882 act in turn appears to have emboldened an Irish woman in San Francisco to act against a Chinese family: Jennie Hurley had moved to the city in the 1850s with her Irish immigrant family, and three decades later, as principal of the Spring Valley School, she refused to admit eight-year-old Mamie Tape, the daughter of Chinese immigrants. In 1885,

the California Supreme Court surprised many by ruling in the schoolgirl's favor. "*Tape v. Hurley* signaled an important shift in the status of the Chinese," Mae M. Ngai argues, "for it had in effect recognized their presence and elevated them to the status of African Americans and American Indians. This may seem like a dubious promotion, but it was an important concession that distinguished between exclusion as a policy goal and presence as a social fact."³⁰ Important for present purposes, the case exemplifies Irish-American efforts to deny the Chinese equal rights—in this instance, the right to enter classrooms where Jennie Hurley, Kate Kennedy, and many other Irish women held sway.

THE TEACHING IRISH

By seeking careers in education, the Kennedy sisters formed part of a late nineteenth-century Irish-American phenomenon. The nuns who taught in Catholic parochial schools often were Irish-born, Janet Nolan writes.³¹ And in cities like San Francisco, even pupils in public schools stood a good chance of having an Irish teacher. "Despite its ambiguous status among the middle classes in Ireland and the United States," Nolan explains, "teaching was held in high esteem by the Irish servants whose American-born daughters flocked into public school teaching."³² She estimates that by "1886, 245 of the 752 teachers in San Francisco, or about a third of the total, had Irish last names. In 1910, 390 of the city's primary school teachers had Irish last names, an astonishing 49 percent of the total."³³ As Nolan notes, this high percentage of Irish-American women in "the city's public schools at the turn of the last century demonstrates an important point of the Irish experience in San Francisco that has been too-long overlooked: by the turn of the century, large numbers of Irish-American women had entered the lower middle class by becoming teachers."³⁴

Catholic Irish-American women schoolteachers confronted discrimination on multiple fronts, and the Kennedys were no exception. Shortly after her 1853 arrival in San Francisco, Alice became the first Kennedy to gain employment as a teacher, but when the nativist Know-Nothing Party swept to power a year later, Alice was fired on account of her religion and ethnicity. The Know-Nothings' reign proved so ephemeral that eleven months later, Alice was reinstated. Soon joining her in the profession were sisters Lizzie, who remained a member of San Francisco's teaching corps for an incredible 57 years, and, of course, Kate.³⁵ Perhaps due to the increasing numbers of Irish Catholic teachers, pupils, and school board

members, “sectarianism in the classroom became more muted over time.”³⁶ The same could not be said of sexism, and it is for her resistance to that form of discrimination that Kate Kennedy deserves close attention.

AN ACTIVIST EDUCATOR

Kate Kennedy began her career in education in 1856 in the town of Suisun, about fifty miles east of San Francisco. Within a year she was employed in the latter city; and for the next three decades, she would dedicate herself to her work as a teacher and principal. Alone among Eliza’s children, Kate never married; indeed, there is no record of her ever having any kind of intimate relationship. Her niece, Alice Clare Lynch, writes that “Aunt Kate could scarcely have made progress in her profession if she had married as her sisters did, but having no family cares, she devoted herself to her chosen work with an ardor and singleness of purpose which could not fail to raise her above the level of those who worked with a divided mind.” Lynch adds: “She had suitors, being an attractive young woman, but none that could measure up to the requirements of her mind and intellect, and perhaps she realized that ‘he travels fastest who travels alone.’”³⁷

Kennedy was named principal of a city grammar school a year after her first San Francisco teaching appointment. Much to her indignation, she discovered that she was being paid far less than her male counterparts.³⁸ Kennedy fought back, relying on the political training begun back in Ireland and since nurtured in San Francisco—including an alliance with Henry George, journalist, and notable progressive social reformer. She insisted that women and men should be paid alike, in a campaign that culminated with the California legislature’s passage on March 30, 1874, of a bill proclaiming: “Females employed as teachers in the public schools of this State shall in all cases receive the same compensation as allowed male teachers for like services, when holding the same grade of certificate.”³⁹ According to Patrick Dowling, “Kate Kennedy was without a doubt the first woman anywhere in America to receive as a salaried employee equal pay for equal work.”⁴⁰ Extraordinary as the achievement was, it would not be Kennedy’s only notable challenge to the patriarchy.

Like many woman activists of that era, Kennedy spoke out against the denial of suffrage to women. The *Daily Alta California* reported that on the third day of the inaugural convention of the California State Woman Suffrage Society, held in 1870 at San Francisco’s Dashaway Hall, delegates

approved the recommendation of the Committee on Credentials that Kennedy, among others, be admitted to membership.⁴¹ Her long association with such organizations was acknowledged decades later on a page of the magisterial *History of Woman Suffrage*, the editors of which included the two best-known campaigners for the women's vote, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.⁴²

That mention intrigues, not least because three authors who have profiled Kennedy in any significant manner—Lynch, Dowling, and deFord—all maintain that Stanton and Anthony went to Kennedy's school to congratulate the educator on her role in California's enactment of the 1874 law mandating equal pay for equal work. The scene is gripping, but my research compels me to conclude, most likely apocryphal. All three authors appear to rely on a single source, a panegyric that Leonora Beck read to Chicago's Single Tax Club, which Beck had helped found, following Kennedy's death.⁴³ But Beck most likely misspoke. Stanton and Anthony were in San Francisco only once during Kennedy's lifetime. It is possible that they made Kennedy's acquaintance at the suffrage convention that brought them to the city; however, searches of San Francisco newspapers and of writings, letters, and biographies related to Stanton and Anthony have turned up no evidence of this.⁴⁴ Even if a meeting did take place, Stanton and Anthony surely did not mention the California law, because the convention occurred in 1871, 3 years before the law was passed.

What is more, the 1887 *History of Woman Suffrage* that Stanton and Anthony helped co-edit gives only one terse reference to the law: "During the session of 1873–4 a bill was passed by the legislature making women eligible to school offices, and also one which provided that all women employed in the public schools should receive the same compensation as men holding the same grade certificates."⁴⁵ The 1874 law may have received short shrift simply because the *History*'s editors relied on state organizations to provide them with information, and most leaders of the California suffragist movement were well-to-do WASPs likely to favor neither Kennedy's ethnic background nor leftist politics. At least as significant is the fact that in the intervening 13 years, the law had not delivered on its promise. Myra Strober and Laura Best speculate that the 1874 act was not widely known outside of San Francisco;⁴⁶ the salaries of woman teachers continued to lag far behind those of their male counterparts. Whatever the reason, the single sentence in the *History* undercuts the notion that the two famous suffragists considered Kennedy's achievement so groundbreaking that it merited a special visit to her workplace. Kennedy's

commitment to suffrage nevertheless would play a role in her own, final fight against school officials.

Men occupied all the senior positions within San Francisco's Education Department. All school inspectors were men, and by 1880, they began a concerted effort to reduce "female supervisory authority."⁴⁷ Surveillance increased, and restrictions tightened. Nolan writes that despite the "attempts to limit access to teaching jobs and to curtail upward teacher mobility into principalships, the daughters of Irish San Francisco overcame many of the challenges imposed by the gatekeepers."⁴⁸ Kennedy's vigorous labor activism puts her in this circle. In 1886, Kennedy—by then a member of a leading trade union, the Knights of Labor—publicly contributed money to a transport worker strike fund, and then had the temerity to seek public office, taking on Andrew J. Moulder, incumbent California Superintendent for Public Education.⁴⁹ Kate knew she did not have much chance of winning the general election but ran anyway "for the purpose of bringing more prominently before the people the question of woman suffrage," her brother, Patrick, recalled. "She paid her own printing and campaign expense, and received quite a complimentary vote, sufficient to defeat Mr. Moulder, the Democratic candidate."⁵⁰ A year later, Moulder sought his revenge.

Kennedy applied for a year's leave of absence in 1887, with the aim of touring Europe. She was by this stage fluent in German, French, Italian, and Spanish, and wished to put these proficiencies to good use to investigate various countries' educational and economic systems.⁵¹ Of particular interest to her was women's education.⁵² The Board of Education granted Kennedy's request,⁵³ and she sailed to Europe where she spoke with academics at leading universities, including Oxford.⁵⁴ But on her return home, she found that she had been demoted: the Moulder-controlled Board offered her a post at a less prestigious school and at a considerably lower salary. Kennedy sued and won, by way of a California Supreme Court decision ordering the Board to reinstate her with back wages totaling \$5000.⁵⁵ On account of this precedent, which secured tenure for instructors in the state, Miriam Allen deFord declares in her 1941 portrait of Kennedy that the "organized teachers of today ought to remember this woman, who fought their battles."⁵⁶ The statement hearkens to the *Los Angeles Herald*'s 1890 prediction that the case "will prove a great source of comfort and peace of mind to competent public school teachers. Heretofore their tenure of position has been precarious and subject to the arbitrary will of the appointing power and of the influential politicians

behind school board. [...] In light of this decision local Boards of Education will be required to revise their methods.”⁵⁷

Well before the effects of the Supreme Court decision became clear, the toll on Kennedy, physically drained by her ordeal, was evident. She declined to return to work as her health deteriorated rapidly. Just a few weeks after the court’s order, on March 18, 1890, Kennedy died at the age of sixty-one. She was buried without religious ceremony, as she had requested. “I know that none more than our dead would deprecate any fulsome eulogy, such as is too common on such solemn occasions as this, for her simple heart despised all shams and merely formal ceremonies,” Judge James G. Maguire explained at her graveside.⁵⁸ Adding that she nonetheless had asked “some friend” to say a few words, Maguire declared that:

regardless of the distinctions and classifications prevailing in human society, regardless of the divisions of races, parties, and creeds—she loved her fellow creatures one and all; that she sympathized with the poor and oppressed of her brethren; that she labored and hoped for the restoration to them of their natural heritage, of their natural opportunities, believing firmly that the greatest portion of human miseries, in the present age, springs from the exclusion of the poor from the resources which the Creator has so generously and so bountifully provided.⁵⁹

Maguire thus paints Kennedy as a figure concerned with questions not only of sex and gender but also of race and economic inequality. The following analysis of her Georgist writings will test Maguire’s assertions.

A GEORGIST AUTHOR

Kennedy begins one of her best-known writings by quoting a 1785 tale of inequity which displays the deep roots of today’s rhetoric about the unjustly enriched 1 percent. The author, Dr. William Paley, an English theologian and Episcopal bishop, had imagined “a flock of a pigeons in a field of corn,” with “... ninety-nine of them gathering all they got into a heap, reserving nothing for themselves but chaff and the refuse, keeping this heap for one and that the weakest, perhaps worst pigeon of the flock,” a wastrel who does not share in their work.⁶⁰ “[I]f a pigeon more hardy or hungry than the rest, touched a grain of the hoard,” Paley envisions “all the others instantly flying upon it and tearing it to pieces.” The grim scenario, he concludes, is “nothing more than what is every day practiced and

established among men.”⁶¹ In her essay, “Dr. Paley’s Foolish Pigeons,” Kennedy agrees: “From time immemorial, the wheat fields of the world have been monopolized by a small class of worthless and puny, featherless pigeons” she writes,⁶² and then gives voice to her own views by expanding on this parable by Paley, whom she admires as “a liberal and farseeing churchman.”⁶³ This essay appeared in a volume published in 1906 by her brother Patrick.

In a preface, he signs “P. J. Kennedy,” Patrick explains: “Miss Kennedy’s parable of Doctor Paley’s foolish pigeons clearly shows how the industrial slaves are robbed of their labor by private property in land.”⁶⁴ The characterization evokes the theories of one of his sister’s most significant associates, Henry George.⁶⁵ Born in 1839 into a working-class family in Philadelphia, George arrived in San Francisco in 1858, not long after the Kennedys, and lived there until 1880. He worked his way up from printer to journalist to editor and publisher of one of the city’s newspapers. Having observed the destructive power of large landowners and monopoly capitalists in frontier California, George argues in *Progress and Poverty* that one tax—a single tax, on land values—would alleviate poverty, curb monopoly, and end inequality. Although mainstream economists were quick to dismiss George as a self-educated radical, his 1879 work “quickly became a worldwide best seller.”⁶⁶ George himself became a firm supporter of the Irish Land League, and his visits to Ireland included a stint as a reporter for the *Irish World*, published in New York by Land Leaguer Patrick Ford. British authorities arrested George twice, cementing his favorable reputation within the Irish-American community.⁶⁷

While George was in San Francisco, he and Kennedy formed a close political relationship, one that deFord likens to the relationship between Karl Marx and August Babel, whom she labels Marx’s “propagandist and disseminator of the doctrine.”⁶⁸ Attesting to Kennedy’s devotion is the fact that she bequeathed \$10,000 to the single-tax cause. She also left her eulogist, Judge Maguire, money so that he might publish her own political writings; he did not, and so in the end it fell to Patrick to reach into his own coffers to carry out his sister’s wish.⁶⁹

The 1906 volume begins with “Dr. Paley’s Foolish Pigeons” and concludes with a series of articles entitled “Short Sermons to Workingmen” and originally published in the *San Francisco Weekly Star* under the pseudonym Cato the Censor, Kennedy’s tongue-in-cheek reference to the ultra-conservative Roman statesman. Read alongside “Paley’s Pigeons,” the articles attempt to subvert dogma by parodying a well-known medium of

religious communication, the sermon. “Paley’s Pigeons” is a parable of stupidity, greed, corruption, and deprivation that exposes the accumulation of wealth—primitive accumulation, as Marx calls it—as the immoral heart of capitalism. In this parable, all work is done by “toilers,” while “philosophic pigeons,” “judicial pigeons,” and “warrior pigeons” support the oppressive status quo. Kennedy pulls no punches when she writes of the “Royal Pigeon, the prince of the idle ones, who is believed by the stupid toilers to be descended from the gods and to hold his power from them.”⁷⁰

Kennedy’s consideration of the colonial conquest of America demonstrated that she, not unlike other reformers of the time, was tinged by scientific racism and paternalism, forms of racist thinking then prevalent. She writes of “Native pigeons” whose lands are confiscated as “a copper-colored race, inferior in intelligence and thrift to the light-colored race that supplanted them, but far superior in their devotion to freedom.”⁷¹ All-important is the natives’ relationship to the land on which they no longer may live. The confiscators call themselves “proprietor,” a title “more democratic” than “noble”⁷²—yet soon they too seek a labor force more compliant than the natives whose land they have seized:

At length they came upon a large country called the ‘Dark Continent,’ because it was inhabited by a race of dark-colored pigeons, who had for ages been subjected to such a course of irresponsible oppression that they had lost all idea of individual rights, and thought that their only resource was to submit to the tyranny of their masters. So they were dark in mind as in body. These tyrants, in exchange for food, fiery drinks and gewgaws, transferred great numbers of the poor dark-colored toilers to the nobles of the old land, and the proprietors of the new, who employed them to work in the wheat fields of the new land.⁷³

Kennedy’s disapproval of chattel slavery is apparent. But her descriptions of the slaves themselves belies little understanding of their subjectivity: “To all these tyrannous restrictions they submitted without complaint, for in the Dark Continent their condition was so much more deplorable that they felt comparatively happy with bare food and shelter.”⁷⁴

After helping to fight a War of Independence against the nobles, the toilers learn that the proprietor can be as oppressive as his predecessor. A new class of “political pigeon” affects sympathy for the toilers, yet secretly works for the proprietors.⁷⁵ These political pigeons push the foolish toiler

pigeons toward nativism, inciting them to oppose new increases in immigration.⁷⁶ The reference to migration casts Kennedy's eyes back toward her own native Ireland. She writes of landowning nobles who, sensing trouble in the Irish air, demand that the "theologic pigeons" talk to their flock. Obeying, leading clergy tell "their subordinates: 'Go ye and preach to these rebels, and threaten them with the wrath of the gods if they respect not the privileges of the nobles.'"⁷⁷ Some subordinates disobey, but most do not. In this passage of the parable, Kennedy exposes what she sees as the complicit role of the Catholic Church in the Famine: priests frightened the masses into inaction, and millions perished from hunger.⁷⁸ As for those who managed to cross the ocean, Kennedy's account reflects the experience of her own family. While many an illiterate and penniless Famine refugee traveled in steerage on so-called coffin ships, the Kennedys had enjoyed a "pleasant voyage" aboard the sailing vessel *Caleb Grimshaw*⁷⁹ and disembarked at New York harbor, equipped with education and financial wherewithal. United States nativism did not present itself to such newcomers; quite the contrary, the toilers of the new land welcomed these arrivals with open arms: "Ye shall dwell with us and share our opportunities, for we are brothers in misfortune, and together we will fight against the wrongs that oppress us."⁸⁰

Despite this rosy picture, Kennedy finds fault with Americans' idealism: they "had proclaimed that all pigeons were equally entitled to life and liberty" and "were silly enough to imagine that the mere assertion of this fact was sufficient to secure their rights without further trouble."⁸¹ Their Constitution permitted servitude; "they did not assert the right of the dark race to freedom but permitted their masters to carry out the system of slavery and oppression that already existed."⁸² In a dig at Christian hypocrisy, Kennedy asserts: "For though all pigeons profess to believe that it is a duty of each to love his neighbor as he loves himself, their professions are in a strange contrast to their practice. [...] Therefore, as long as they supposed that the institution of slavery did not interfere with their comfort they endured it with stolid indifference."⁸³

After the Civil War, moreover, the former "masters" come to realize that employing ex-slaves as "free toilers" was much more profitable as they did not have to worry about clothing and housing their plantation workers, and they could pay them as little as they wanted. Hence in post-bellum America, the lot of the former slaves hardly improves.⁸⁴ Capitalism has won in America, and it will continue to win, "Paley's Pigeons" concludes, without drastic change. Kennedy returns to the image of the field—it is

now a field of wheat, not corn—and “demand[s] [...] that all shall have access to the wheat fields the gods have provided” in order to “secure equality and justice, liberty and life, for then the industrious shall rejoice in abundance, and the idle alone shall hunger.”⁸⁵

Georgist themes of property, land, liberty, equality, labor, and capital likewise abound in “Short Sermons to Workingmen,” the collection that forms the second part of the 1906 volume. Kennedy writes again of the failure of America’s democratic promises in the chapter entitled “Liberty, Equality, Prosperity Secured by Simple Justice.” The “sublime truths” enunciated in the Declaration of Independence were not fully grasped by a large majority of the forefathers, she laments. “If they believed that all men have a right to liberty would they have accepted a constitution that condemned all their colored fellow citizens to slavery? No, they would not have tolerated such an idea for a single instant.”⁸⁶ Even after “the slaves were set free,” the recognition that Black persons enjoyed equal rights “was but partial and imperfect.”⁸⁷ By way of example, Kennedy points to those “soldiers of the Union army” who “did not believe that the colored race had a right to liberty”; those soldiers, she says, “fought and bled to save the Union, not to free the slaves.”⁸⁸

The collection of 2000–3000-word “sermons” is notable on several other accounts. Every one begins with “Fellow-Workmen,” a curious phrasing, given Kennedy’s activism on behalf of women. In point of fact, Kennedy’s writings do not reveal any reference to working women, to women’s suffrage, or indeed to any women’s issue. In the racially charged political discourse of Kennedy’s time and place, the binary opposite of “workingman” was not “workingwoman,” but rather “Chinaman.” The fact underscores that Kennedy sought to address a precise audience: white, working-class males. She aimed to persuade these workingmen that their real enemies were the monopoly capitalists and large landowners, not other immigrants like the Chinese.

Kennedy’s use of parody in both “Paley’s Pigeons” and “Sermons” infuses her writing with its central theme, the Marxian idea of religion as the opium of the people. The ideological role of religion is fused through a Gramscian-like understanding of the workings of hegemony. She is well attuned to how an issue like immigration represents a distraction, a means for the ruling class to keep the masses in the dark as to the true source of their misery—monopoly capitalism. The masses consent to their own exploitation out of a sense of racial superiority, encouraged by the ruling elite. And though Kennedy herself appeals to the base racist views of her

readers, she turns racism on its head, by diverting her readers' animosity toward the real source of their misery, capitalism. She urges her readers to see that people of all races deserve the same basic human rights.

By way of example, Kennedy poses the Chinese Question in Sermon No. 2, and she gives an answer that stands at odds with many in the Irish-American community, in the Single Tax movement, and in white society overall. This sermon challenges those employers who assert that wages are low simply because there are too many laborers; California has room for 50 million inhabitants, Kennedy contends, "and it is not near 1 million right now."⁸⁹ Competition within the labor market "is not the disease from which we suffer, and therefore the remedy which you propose, viz: the restriction of the number of laborers, will bring us no permanent relief."⁹⁰ Kennedy's response to the then dominant call to restrict the influx of workers—a call directed primarily at Chinese migrant workers—reveals her pro-immigration viewpoint. To say that she favored Chinese immigration is not to say necessarily that she favored the Chinese, however. Although Kennedy was entrenched in San Francisco's school system by the 1880s, research has not discovered her position on *Tape v. Hurley*, in which a court ordered that a Chinese schoolgirl be permitted to attend a school previously reserved to whites; whether Kennedy supported the Chinese plaintiffs or the Irish defendant remains unknown.

Furthermore, Kennedy ventures her pro-immigration opinion back-handedly. Just as "Paley's Pigeons" belittles Native Americans and African Americans at the same time as it expresses sympathy for their plight, Sermon No. 2 slurs yet another racial minority before defending it. "Look across the broad Pacific to that festering empire whose degraded hordes threaten to overwhelm us beneath an avalanche of barbarism," Kennedy tells her reader in a reference to China. "Know you not that the ancestors of those degraded victims of oppression formed the vanguard of civilization when our forefathers were roaming half-naked through the forests of Germany or Gaul?"⁹¹

As proof of the folly of restricting labor, Kennedy skewers Thomas Malthus, but at the expense of the Chinese, whose emperors, she writes, "practiced the maxims of Malthus centuries before that worthy enlightened the Western world. They limited the increase of the laboring classes by the murder of their infants, and by every other means that vice and penury could suggest to a depraved and downtrodden race."⁹² The effort failed, in Kennedy's view, because the emperors "left untouched that giant evil 'land Monopoly'."⁹³ She returns to that viewpoint in another essay,

entitled “How Industry Is Robbed by Land Monopoly,” in which she lambasts the theorist behind the calamitous British response to the Irish Famine, though in a very different context. Kennedy grieves “to see that a large proportion of my fellow-workmen still blindly adhere to the exploded fallacies of Malthus. They assume that the laborers form the surplus class, and they believe that the only way to raise their wages is to limit the number of wage workers. In order to effect this our protective societies [...] prevent the migration of laborers by intimidation, if need be.”⁹⁴ It is their mistake; the real evil is, again, the land monopoly. Once that evil is abolished, all will be well, she promises in Sermon No. 2: “The life-giving rays of the sun of liberty shall flash over the Pacific to enlighten and revive the palsied nations of the Orient, and the liberty, equality, and fraternity of man be established forever. Amen.”⁹⁵

CONCLUSION

Over the years, both American historiography and Irish-American memory have tended to homogenize Famine Irish refugees. Typically, they are seen as exceedingly poor, uneducated, and desperate people. In fact, the circumstances of these Irish, like all migrants, varied a good deal. Among those who belie standard homogenization are the Kennedys of San Francisco. They arrived with the skills and training to succeed in America; from the outset, the daughters’ ability to speak French gave them access to employment in New York’s French-dominated embroidery business.⁹⁶ After moving West, the entire family succeeded financially and socially—as part of the fabric of a San Francisco Famine Irish experience quite different from that of their compatriots along the Eastern seaboard.⁹⁷ The educational training that began with Kate’s studies at the Loreto eventually afforded her and her sisters Alice and Lizzie entry into San Francisco’s teaching corps; to that profession Lizzie, and of course Kate, would make significant contributions.

Kate Kennedy’s story diverges not only from that of other Famine refugees, but even from the stories of others in her family. Unlike her siblings, Kate never married and instead embarked on a path-breaking career. As a schoolteacher and principal, she secured a legislative promise that women would earn equal pay for equal work and a judicial promise that teachers would enjoy security of tenure. As a polemicist, she expressed views that, when analyzed within the constraints of her time, challenged what her eulogist called “division of races, parties, and creeds.”⁹⁸ And while most of

the other Kennedys remained practicing Catholics, Kate Kennedy left the Church at an early age. Surely there were Catholic clerics who urged ostracism. Yet the family remained close, respecting Kate's secular views even at her burial.

Kate Kennedy's different Famine Irish journey is evident even in the circumstances of her return to Ireland. In the summer of 1878, after a ten-day Atlantic crossing, she set eyes on the country that she had fled decades before. She came as a professional—a noted educator and, for this trip, a journalist tasked to write travelogues for publications such as Henry George's *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin*. Her hinted antipathy to singing the "English" national anthem would have struck a harmonious chord within many of her Irish readers in America.⁹⁹ But her explicit criticism of religion in general, and Catholicism in particular, would have set her in opposition to most of those same readers. Nevertheless, she writes: "The number and magnificence of the churches in Ireland, often in direct contrast to the poverty of the people, is calculated to give one a strong impression of their mystical devotional nature, which finds it easy to sacrifice the material, tangible goods of this world to the hope of future bliss."¹⁰⁰ Her praise of Belfast's Queen's College similarly contains a scathing critique of the Catholic Church, which had reviled such institutions as "Godless." "The peasantry heed the warning," Kennedy writes, "and prefer to see their children grow up ignorant believers, rather than run the risk of becoming intelligent doubters."¹⁰¹ That note of lament at her compatriots' choice surfaces elsewhere in her travelogues. As a journalist, she had to write with an American readership in mind, yet one senses in her words the returning migrant's raw sense of elation, and of alienation. On first seeing Ireland again, Kennedy muses: "Everything was so new and strange, the rich cultivated fields separated by hawthorn hedges, the soft delicious verdure, the air of peaceful repose, and the graceful clumps of foliage, that we forgot both fatigue and hunger in the admiration they excited."¹⁰² Yet, while in Ireland, she celebrates the 4th of July, "the anniversary of which stirs every American heart to its innermost recesses, and our little party was in patriotic glow."¹⁰³ Kennedy reveals herself as both an Irish exile and an American national—at once, an Irish Famine refugee and an American feminist.

EXTRACT: KATE KENNEDY, "THE FOOLISH PIGEONS,"
 IN *DOCTOR PALEY'S FOOLISH PIGEONS, AND SHORT SERMONS
 TO WORKING-MEN* (SAN FRANCISCO, CUBERY & CO.,
 1906), 33-42

The Foolish Pigeons.

A Continuation of Their History.

When the tribes had succeeded in driving out the nobles and their adherents, they foolishly fancied that their liberty was firmly established and the prosperity of their descendants secured forever. They were therefore much surprised and disappointed to realize that their condition was, but slightly ameliorated and that the ills and abuses they had fought to abolish continued to oppress them.

However, they encouraged one another saying: "The terrible struggle in which we have been lately engaged has undoubtedly entailed misery and distress upon the victors as well as the vanquished. Let us therefore wait patiently until its effects have passed away and we shall then enjoy the fruits of our courage and self-denial."

But as time wore on, they began to find out that the proprietors who monopolized the wheat fields from which the whole pigeon race drew their subsistence were as fatal to their progress as the nobles, for whenever their granaries were well filled they turned the poor toilers out of the wheat fields and forced them down into the ranks of the pauper and predatory classes. And when the toilers complained of the hardships of their condition and the cruelty of those proceedings they were met by the arguments of the political pigeons.

They were a new class which had developed in the new land. They affected to sympathize deeply with the toilers and to have no object in life except their welfare. But they were secretly allied with the proprietors, and they sought to obtain the confidence of the poor toilers for the sole purpose of betraying their interests to the proprietors, who did not fail to reward them richly for their shameless perfidy.

They said to the toilers: "You are the authors of your own misery, inasmuch as ye permit the toilers of the old land who are accustomed to scanty rations of inferior food, to come hither freely and to compete with you in your struggle for subsistence."

"The proprietors, of course, prefer to employ them, because they are more subservient and they are willing to work longer, and to subsist on

less than you can. Keep them out, therefore, and the proprietors will be forced to employ you, and your little ones shall not be obliged to beg for permission to labor."

The foolish toilers applauded this advice, and tried various expedients to prevent their

kindred in the old land from escaping the tyranny from which they themselves had fled. They did not yet perceive the injustice of the proprietary system, nor that it was the chief cause of the evils under which they groaned. On the contrary they were proud of it, and because many toilers in a new land had become proprietors and had serfs of their own, they hoped that in time they themselves or their children might be equally fortunate.

Meanwhile the conditions of the toilers in the old land grew every day more desperate, and it came to pass that the coarse and common seeds from which they drew their subsistence failed to grow, and though the wheat was more abundant than ever, yet as the nobles claimed it all, the poor toilers starved by thousands amid the stores of food which their industry had collected, and they grew desperate and said:

"We will endure this misery no longer, for we will eat of the food which our labor has produced, and our little ones shall not perish of hunger."

But the nobles objected, saying: "Ye shall not do this, for the wheat is our property"

Yet as the toilers were steadfast in their determination, and very numerous, the nobles were fearful lest, being nerved by despair, they might succeed in overpowering the warriors and the guardians of the peace who were employed to repress them, therefore they called into their councils the leaders of the Theologic Pigeons and said to them:

"Behold! These turbulent slaves are again in a state of rebellion. They are more united

than they have ever been before, and we fear that our warriors may not be able to suppress them.

"They have lost all confidence in our legislative pigeons, and heed no more the majesty of the law.

"They are keenly suspicious of the diplomatic and judicial pigeons, and will not hearken to their advice, neither will they respect their decrees.

"They stubbornly refuse to be guided by the wisdom of the philosopher, but in you they still have unbounded faith. You can persuade them to submit to the law. You alone can prevent the havoc and the destruction of property that must result from a conflict. Do it, therefore, we command

you, or the privileges we have granted you shall be withdrawn, and you shall be left to share the fate of the wretches whose cause you espoused."

The leaders obeyed, and said to their subordinates: "Go ye and preach to these rebels,

and threaten them with the wrath of the gods if they respect not the privileges of the nobles."

But many of the subordinates who had lived among the toilers and witnessed the unmerited sufferings they were forced to endure, refused, saying, "We will utter no threat against them. They have a right to eat of the fruits of their labor, for the gods themselves have decreed it."

Yet the greater number obeyed the mandate of their leaders, and harangued the toilers, saying: "Ignorant and benighted pigeons! Your iniquity has made thee blind. Ye believe that the nobles are the cause of your misery, but ye are mistaken. They are merely the instruments of your punishment, for your sins have drawn down upon you the wrath of the gods, and they have blighted your food as a penalty for your transgression. Hie ye, therefore, to the temples and humble your stubborn hearts in penitence and prayer. Dare not to question the justice of the immortal gods, nor to cavil at their decrees, for ye are not able to fathom their designs.

"But we have been anointed with the oil of the olives that grow on the sacred mount of Olympus. It has opened our ears to the voice of the gods, and enabled our eyes to behold the things that are hidden. To us have been discovered the secrets of the future, and the keys of the portals of the mysterious land beyond the grave are entrusted to our care. Our tongues alone can utter the talismanic words which open the gates of Elysium and admit the servants of the gods to the dwellings of light. We are the ambassadors of the gods, appointed to make known to you their inexorable will, and they have commanded you to submit unquestionably to our guidance and direction.

"Now, therefore, we say unto you: Touch not the property of the nobles nor rebel against their power, for if ye do, we will withhold the magic words that open the gates of the mansions of bliss, and ye shall be plunged into a lake of unquenchable fire and punishment therein with never-ending torments.

"If ye shrink with terror from the pangs of hunger, which in a few days are terminated by death, bethink ye how ye shall endure the fiery torches that can never end, surrounded as ye shall be by the shrieks and wailings of anguish, the groans of agony and the blasphemous ravings of despair."

The poor toilers were palsied with terror. They could have faced the formidable hosts of the warriors, and bravely determined to conquer or die, but at the threats of the theologians their nerveless arms fell powerless; they were shriveled up with fear. They turned away their eyes, that they might not behold the wasted forms of their loved ones. They closed their ears lest they should be maddened by their groans. They choked back the curses that gurgled in their dying throats against the tyrants that crushed them, and they endured without resistance the lingering tortures of hunger, until death put an end to their misery. They perished by millions. And the fields where they labored were whitened by their bones.

But the toilers of the new land, when they heard of their sufferings, forgot their self-interest in sympathy for their kindred, and they carried to them provisions and saved the lives of thousands. And they helped hundreds of thousands of other survivors to come over to the new land, and said to them: “Ye shall dwell with us and share our opportunities, for we are brothers in misfortune, and together we will fight against the wrongs that oppress us.”

NOTES

1. Scholarship has largely bypassed Kennedy. Even Tara McCarthy’s excellent recent work, 2018, *Respectability and Reform: Irish American Women’s Activism, 1880–1920* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press), affords her only a couple of lines.
2. Alice Clare Lynch 1935, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda* (San Francisco: Marnell & Co.), 6.
3. Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 2.
4. Patrick J Dowling 1988, *California, The Irish Dream* (San Francisco: Golden Gate Publishers), 241–42.
5. Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 3–4. Neither Lynch nor any other member of the family offer any explanation for the disinheritance.
6. Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 8.
7. Crowd estimates were, and are, highly political. British authorities at the time of this meeting gave drastically lower estimates than those journalists sympathetic to the Irish cause whose estimates ranged from 750,000 to 1.5 million. Gary Owens suggests that such figures should be reduced by around 75% to get a more accurate crowd size. See Gary Owens 1998, “Nationalism without Words: Symbolism and Ritual Behavior in the Repeal ‘Monster Meetings’ of 1843–5,” in James S. Donnelly & Kirby

A. Miller (eds) *Irish Popular Culture, 1650–1850* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press), 242–69.

8. Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 8.
9. Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 7.
10. See for example her essay, “Effects of Machinery—Origin of Capital: the True Remedy For Social Ills.” Kate Kennedy 1906, *Doctor Paley's Foolish Pigeons and Short Sermons to Workingmen* (San Francisco: Cubery & Co.), especially 219–23.
11. Janet Nolan 2004, *Servants of the Poor: Teachers and Mobility in Ireland and Irish America* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press), 68; Miriam Allen deFord 1941, *They Were San Franciscans* (Caldwell: Caxton Printers), 151.
12. Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 8–9.
13. Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 10.
14. deFord, *They Were San Franciscans*, 146.
15. Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 14.
16. The 1852 Census reveals that only 5.1 percent of San Francisco's Irish population arrived directly from Ireland. R.A. Burchell 1980, *The San Francisco Irish, 1848–1880*. (Berkeley: University of California Press), 34. After the discovery of gold in New South Wales in 1851, many Australian-Irish in America returned across the Pacific, leaving America's Eastern cities the biggest source of Irish arrivals to the Bay Area.
17. James P Walsh 1978, “The Irish in Early San Francisco” in James P. Walsh (ed) *The San Francisco Irish* (San Francisco: The Irish Literary and Historical Society), 21.
18. Kevin Starr 1996, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850–1915* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 94.
19. Walsh, “The Irish in Early San Francisco,” 21; See also James P Walsh 2010, “Tadhg, Let's Change the Subject,” in Maureen O'Connor (ed) *Back to the Future of Irish Studies: Festschrift for Tadhg Foley* (Oxford: Peter Lang), 215–222.
20. See Tomás Almaguer 1994, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 62.
21. Peter D. O'Neill 2017, *Famine Irish and the American Racial State* (New York: Routledge), 153.
22. See Ian Haney López 1997, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press).
23. For more on this process, see O'Neill, “Introduction,” *Famine Irish*.
24. Burchell, *The San Francisco Irish*, 14. For a complete up-to-date analysis of the Irish in nineteenth-century San Francisco, see O'Neill, *Famine Irish*, chapters 5 and 6.

25. For details of these family stories, see Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*. In contrast, Mary was the only sibling who moved back East, in 1859. She married an Irish-born tradesman and led a life in New York City less affluent than that of her sisters in San Francisco. While the main focus of this chapter is on Kate Kennedy, vitally important to this narrative is the supportive family life that she and her intrepid mother, five sisters, and brother enjoyed both in Ireland and in the United States.
26. For details on Kate's estate, see Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 49–50.
27. The Diary was translated into English by her son Frank in 1930. See Alice Kennedy Lynch 1930, *Diary of Alice Kennedy Lynch, July 19, 1857 to January 1, 1865*. The original was written in French. English translation by Frank W. Lynch, recopied by Helen Gregory Lynch. Photostat copy provided by the Bancroft Library, University of California.
28. See O'Neill, *Famine Irish and the American Racial State*.
29. For an account of Kearney and the anti-Chinese movement, see Neil Larry Shumsky 1991, *The Evolution of Political Protest and the Workingmen's Party of California* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press).
30. Mae M Ngai 2008, "History as Law and Life: Tape v. Hurley and the Origins of the Chinese American Middle Class," in Sucheng Chan and Madeline Y. Hsu (eds) *Chinese Americans and the Politics of Race and Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press), 70.
31. Nolan, *Servants of the Poor*, 67–8.
32. Nolan, *Servants of the Poor*, 3.
33. Nolan, *Servants of the Poor*, 68.
34. Nolan, *Servants of the Poor*, 66.
35. Lizzie, a remarkable woman in her own right, deserves more attention than she receives here. Besides her 57-year teaching career, she was a member of the committee that devised San Francisco's City Charter and founded the Teacher's Mutual Aid Society. Her children include Katherine Delmar Burke, founder of Miss Burke's School, an exclusive private girls' school still in existence today. In addition to Lizzie's profile in Lynch, see Millard Bailey 1924, *History of the San Francisco Bay Region: History and Biography, Volume 3*. (Chicago: American Historical Society) 184–88. A profile of her husband is found in Bailey, 188–89.
36. Nolan, *Servants of the Poor*, 74.
37. Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 39–40.
38. Dowling, *California, The Irish Dream*, 243.
39. F. P. Deering 1886, *The Codes and Statutes of California, as Amended and in Force at the Close of the Twenty-sixth Session of the Legislature, 1885: With Notes Containing References to All the Decisions of the Supreme Court*

Construing Or Illustrating the Sections of the Codes, and to Adjudications of the Courts of Other States Having Like Code Provisions, Volume 1. (San Francisco: Bancroft-Whitney), 294.

40. Dowling, *California, The Irish Dream*, 244.
41. *Daily Alta California*, 22, no. 7253 (29 Jan. 1870). See also Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan Brownell Anthony, & Matilda Joslyn Gage (eds) 1887, *History of Woman Suffrage. Vol. III, 1876–1885* (Rochester: Susan B. Anthony), 753.
42. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony 2003, *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, Vol. III: National Protection for National Citizens, 1873 to 1880*, (ed) Ann D. Gordon (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP), 978.
43. Leonora Beck, “A Single Tax Woman.” (Paper Read by Leonora Beck Before the Single Tax Club of Chicago, Ill., and subsequently published in *The Standard*, Extra No. 27, New York, 19 Dec. 1891) Copy courtesy of Radcliffe College Library. Beck states that she befriended Kennedy in 1887.
44. Sources consulted on this point include: Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage*; Ida Husted Harper 1898, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony* (Indianapolis: Hollenbeck Press), and *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, (ed) Ann D. Gordon.
45. Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage* vol. 3, 757.
46. Strober, Myra H. and Laura Best 1979, “The Female/Male Salary Differential in Public Schools: Some Lessons From San Francisco, 1879,” *California Center for Educational Research at Stanford* (Report No. 79-B7), 3.
- Available at: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED175118.pdf>.
Reprinted in *Economic Inquiry: Journal of the Western Economic Association*, XVII: 218–36.
47. Nolan, *Servants of the Poor*, 77.
48. Nolan, *Servants of the Poor*, 79.
49. Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 46. Her nomination was reported in the *Daily Alta California*, 41, no. 13544 (28 Sept. 1886).
50. P. J. Kennedy, “Preface” to Kate Kennedy 1906, *Doctor Paley’s Foolish Pigeons and Short Sermons to Workingmen* (San Francisco: Cubery & Co.), xiii.
51. Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 41.
52. P. J. Kennedy, “Preface,” xiv.
53. This decision was reported in the *Daily Alta California*, 30, no. 10268 (22 May 1887).
54. *Daily Alta California*, 30, no. 10268 (22 May 1887).

55. Lynch put this figure at \$5,700.75. *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 47.
56. deFord, *They Were San Franciscans*, 138; see also, Roy W. Cloud 1952, *Education in California: Leaders, Organizations and Accomplishments of the First 100 Years* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 88.
57. *Los Angeles Herald*, 33, no. 92 (11 Jan. 1890).
58. Quoted in Beck, “A Single Tax Woman,” 9.
59. Beck, “A Single Tax Woman,” 9.
60. Qtd in K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 1.
61. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 1. See also William Paley 1831, “Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy,” in *The Works of William Paley, with a Life of the Author* (London: Jennings & Chaplin), 34.
62. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 3–4.
63. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 2.
64. P.J. Kennedy, “Preface,” xvii.
65. Brief biographical and archival information may be found at the New York Public Library website: <http://archives.nypl.org/mss/1137>, (online), accessed 24 July. 2022.
66. Mary M. Cleveland 2012, “The Economics of Henry George: A Review Essay,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 71, no. 2: 499.
67. For an account of George’s relationship with Ireland and Irish America, see Edward T O’Donnell 1997, “‘Though Not an Irishman’: Henry George and the American Irish,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 56, no. 4: 407–19. Despite the many critics, George’s theories continue to garner some support. See Philip J. Bryson 2011, *The Economics of Henry George: History’s Rehabilitation of America’s Greatest Early Economist* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
68. deFord, *They Were San Franciscans*, 123. Apparently, Marx was not so enamored by George, whose teachings he labeled “‘Capitalism’s last ditch.’” Quoted in Bryson, *The Economics of Henry George*, 176.
69. Perhaps Judge Maguire felt his bequest would be better spent on his own political career: following Kennedy’s death, the Boston-born Democrat served three terms as a Congressman and ran unsuccessfully for California Governor. And in 1888, while still a judge on the Superior Court of San Francisco, Maguire published his own book, *Ireland and the Pope: A Brief History of Papal Intrigues Against Irish Liberty, from Adrian IV. To Leo XII.* (San Francisco: James Barry).
70. K. Kennedy, *Paley's* 19.
71. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 21.
72. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 26.
73. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 26–7.
74. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 28.

75. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 34.
76. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 35.
77. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 38.
78. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 41.
79. Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 10.
80. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 42.
81. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 44.
82. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 44–5.
83. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 45.
84. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 48–9.
85. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 53.
86. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 249–50.
87. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 250.
88. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 250.
89. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 66; Today California has a population of 39.1 million.
Source: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/06>, (online), accessed 24 Jul. 2022.
90. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 67.
91. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 67–8.
92. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 68.
93. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 69.
94. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 118–19.
95. K. Kennedy, *Paley's*, 69–70.
96. Lynch, *The Kennedy Clan and Tierra Redonda*, 11.
97. See O'Neill, *Famine Irish and the American Racial State*, chapters 5 and 6.
98. Quoted in Beck, "A Single Tax Woman," 9.
99. K. Kennedy, "Green Isle," 1.
100. K. Kennedy, "Green Isle," 3.
101. K. Kennedy, "Green Isle," 6.
102. K. Kennedy, "Green Isle," 2.
103. K. Kennedy, "Green Isle," 4.



CHAPTER 8

Margaret Dixon McDougall's *The Days of a Life* (1883): an Irish-Canadian Perspective of the Repetitive Nature of Irish History

Lindsay Janssen

Opening her novel *The Days of a Life* (1883), Irish-Canadian author and journalist Margaret Dixon McDougall (1826/8–99) wrote that the causes of “the living issue” of rural agitation in Ireland were the limited land ownership rights and lack of access to land experienced by the rural tenantry.¹ McDougall described this situation as a form of “oppression that

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no law redresses—robbery that law allows.”² Endorsing land reform and thereby a fairer treatment of the Irish tenantry, which to McDougall would also be done “in the name of Humanity, in the name of Christianity,” she asked how it was possible that the abuses against the Irish tenantry “exist within the shadow of a motherly throne, and under the ægis of our British constitution? [...] It behooves those to whom this green Erin is mother land, without distinction of class, creed, or descent, to enquire into the matter fearlessly, faithfully, asking the question, ‘Are the Irish people thus oppressed?’”³

Born into a prosperous family in Belfast, McDougall emigrated together with her family to Canada in 1843.⁴ In 1881, and at the height of the Land War (1879–82), a period of heightened rural tensions and aggression between tenants and the landed class, McDougall travelled to Ireland as a special correspondent for the Montreal *Witness*. She wrote close to sixty letters about the condition of the peasantry, landlordism, evictions, famine, and tenant rights. They were published as “A Tour Through Ireland” in both the daily and weekly, and Montreal and New York editions of the *Witness*, as well as in the *Almonte Gazette*.⁵ The *Witness* was a Protestant newspaper which catered to a broader (not specifically Irish-Canadian) audience, and which, as editor John Dougall indicated in the prospectus, aimed to provide news on developments and matters which concerned Canada, as well as “important leading articles from the journals of Great Britain and the United States.”⁶ The continued appreciation of McDougall’s letters beyond the Irish diasporic community in Canada is attested by their prominent placement in the *Witness*, where they typically appeared on the second or third page throughout the seven-month long publication run of the “Tour.” The letters would have a longer life, as they were republished as the collection *The Letters of “Norah,” on her Tour Through Ireland, Being a Series of Letters to the Montreal “Witness” as a Special Correspondent to Ireland* in 1882 and recast into novelistic form in 1883.⁷ This essay focuses on this novel version.

McDougall did not support Irish Home Rule but felt that the abuses caused by a corrupted system of land ownership should not be allowed to exist under British governance, as becomes clear from her novel’s epigraph.⁸ The first part of this essay explores McDougall’s fictional rendering of that sociopolitical critique. Of the opinion that the ills leading to the Land War period were long existent rather than particular to that period, McDougall used historical weight to strengthen her calls for societal improvement. She repeatedly created links between the smaller famine

and Land War of 1879–82, on the one hand, and the Great Irish Famine of 1845–52, on the other. In so doing, she discerned a repetitive streak in Irish history. This essay demonstrates that in McDougall's fiction, recollections of the mid-century Famine entail a premediating as well as radical moral function.

BRITISH LAWS ON IRISH SOIL

For *The Days of a Life*, McDougall reshaped her observations as a special correspondent into the perceptions of the young Irish-Canadian protagonist Ida Livingstone, who comes to Ireland on a protracted family visit. Largely set in and around the town of Ramelton in the North of Ireland, the novel deals with the sufferings of Irish tenants at the hands of their landlords. The latter's ideas of governance can best be described as a “bastardized feudalism,”⁹ for, according to the novel, they raise the rent “on the strength of the tenant's own improvements” and “wish to exact feudal service and attachment, but have no idea of performing the feudal duties of protection and care.”¹⁰ The central argument of McDougall's novel focuses on improved tenant right, a devaluation of the power of the landed classes and the concomitant increase of social equality and decrease of religious hostility. As Ida and her Irish relatives and friends are mostly Presbyterians, the novel considers division and the ties between religion and politics in Ireland from that viewpoint, criticizing the Protestant church's function as “an auxiliary” to the abuses caused by political power, as the excerpt from the novel accompanying this essay shows.¹¹

Ida's friend and Land Leaguer Bernard Butler is erroneously held responsible for the murder of the wicked landlord Lord Dane Clermont and is consequently deported. Despite Butler's ardent nationalism, the novel generates empathy for him, without endorsing his ideology. Rather, it is written from a Canadian and Unionist rather than Irish nationalist standpoint.¹² Comparing Ireland to Canada, Ida remarks: “but it is ever so much better in Canada, where the people own the land they live on and do not need any lord's encouragement or permission to thrive.”¹³ Later, she admits that not everyone is equal in Canada, but that social difference does not go hand in glove with oppression there: “Our people do not stand on a dead level; many are rich, many are cultured, but they have no power to oppress the rest [...] or to keep them fenced up in a class by themselves to stay there.”¹⁴

McDougall's novel places the blame for Ireland's current condition on what Irish journalist James Godkin earlier had called "the rottenness at the foundation of the social fabric" of Ireland and the malevolent practices of greedy landlords.¹⁵ The novel does not provide a blanket denunciation of British governmental policy, but contains a favourable view of Prime Minister William Gladstone. It argues that the failure of Gladstone's proposed improvements for Ireland should be accredited to the corruption of the current land system and politics, which was also the cause of much Famine suffering, rather than a shortcoming in his intentions. Land Leaguer Butler, for example, contends that none of the measures proposed by Gladstone will be successful "until the common people are represented, and their representatives listened to."¹⁶ Gladstone's 1870 Land Act, which in principle granted the tenant the "right to sell on his interest in a property to the next incumbent" and thus meant an improvement in tenant rights, is also discussed.¹⁷ In one scene, the reverend's daughter Mathilda Simson remarks that "God has sent his nation a deliverer in the person of Mr Gladstone." However, she is also critical, and states that Gladstone's proposals have proved impracticable, for in the current system "so few of the tenants are able to take advantage of its provisions, because they are too poor."¹⁸

Although Gladstone seemed to understand just how central dealing with the Land Question was to eventually solving the Irish Question, his 1870 Land Act was "relatively limited in its actual effects, and [therefore] did little to pacify Ireland."¹⁹ Contemporary commentators, including American professor David Bennett King, reflected on the difficulties facing Gladstone, who was "a true friend of Ireland, anxious to do all he could for her, that he would do all in his power to make the land bill help the farmer, but that he had great odds to contend against."²⁰ Since the 1850s, the demand for tenant right had comprised the "three Fs": fixity of tenure, fair rents, and freedom to sell. The 1870 Act only engaged with the latter F, and "experience quickly showed that in the absence of the other two it was possible for landlords to undermine or circumvent the objectives of the Act."²¹

After mentioning multiple evictions,²² the chapter "The Law of 1870 Tried" details the case of Aunt Featherstone, a previously prosperous woman who goes to the Dublin Courts after her landlord—Lord Dane Clermont—rack-rents and then evicts her. Dane Clermont is in fact a fictional rendering of William Sydney Clements, the third Earl of Leitrim, (in)famous for his ill-treatment of his tenantry, who was murdered in

1878.²³ Unexpectedly, Aunt Featherstone wins her case and receives £800 in compensation.²⁴ This soon proves to be only an illusive triumph, though, as her law costs virtually amount to that sum, and she still loses her farm worth thousands of pounds. To make matters worse, after further prosecution, her compensation is cut back to £300.²⁵ Thus the novel critically exposes the limited effectuality of the 1870 Act: "This law will not be the final settlement of the land question; it will not be accepted honestly and allowed to work the relief it can. Every lord, so disposed, will drive his coach and four through it."²⁶ Aunt Featherstone's case is described as "not exceptional" in Ireland; moreover, characters question whether the law in Ireland has ever provided any relief for tenants.²⁷

A conversation between Bernard Butler and Reverend Simson best captures the novel's take on the main ill plaguing Ireland. Butler manages to win over to the Land League's side Simson, who until then was critical of all forms of rebellion:

"My mind never grasped the subject in that light," said Mr Simson. "I thought the chief evils were absenteeism, the subdivision of holdings, the bitterness of religious prejudice, over-population, the indolence of the peasantry, and the prevalence of strong drink."

"No, sir; these are evils, but not the evil. The evil is the dreadful doctrine that the Irishman shall have no home in his own land; that he shall not have a dwelling, but a stopping place. This is the source from which misery, pauperism and agrarian crime spring, and have caused the laws of Ireland to be a hissing and a bye word among the nations of the earth."²⁸

Butler's words also subvert the typical pejorative "ethnotype" of the lazy, rebellious Irishman, implied by Simson.²⁹ Rather, Butler argues that the Irish poor display oppositional behaviour because they do not own the land they inhabit and till. This, again, is reminiscent of earlier political rhetoric concerning land rights. In his 1870 *The Land-War in Ireland*, Godkin also condemned Irish dispossession: "Ireland has been irreconcilable, not because she was conquered by England, not even because she was persecuted, but because she was robbed of her inheritance."³⁰ McDougall's explanatory strength regarding the Irish Land Question did not go unnoticed. *Witness* reader "Sanquhar" (suggestive of a Scottish background) praised the letters of the "talented correspondent" for explaining the causes of Irish suffering; this reader also included that the

letters “are causing many of your readers to revise and correct the traditional views which they have entertained, respecting the crimes and sufferings of that unhappy country [Ireland].”³¹ Moreover, the publisher of *The Days of a Life*, William Templeman, marketed this expository power as a selling point. Stating that the novel would appeal to people from McDougall’s home region, the Ottawa Valley, as well as to a larger audience, Templeman wrote that both the collected *Letters of Norah* and *The Days of a Life* “should be bought and read by every person who desires accurate knowledge on the vexed Irish questions.”³²

FAMINES THEN AND NOW

Several commentators reflected on the repetitive nature of Irish history. Authors of fiction like William C. Upton and Thomas Sherlock drew connections between Ireland in the 1880s and 1840s. In the former’s *Uncle Pat’s Cabin; Or, Life Among the Agricultural Labourers of Ireland* (1882)—as the title suggests a work reminiscent of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin; Or, Life Among the Lowly* (1852)—the titular Uncle Pat loses his family during the Great Famine and from then on his living conditions only further deteriorate until he dies during the 1879 famine.³³ In Irish-American author Sherlock’s *The Lord of Dundonald. An Irish Story of To-Day* (1889), the narrator draws several links between the conditions of the Irish poor during the 1880s and the Great Famine, arguing that deprivations during the 1880s are a direct result of the Famine-induced “terrible depopulation” and “whole-sale evictions.”³⁴

Beyond the realm of fiction, transhistorical connections were frequent and served as powerful rhetorical tools in the struggles for land reform, Home Rule, and Irish independence.³⁵ Irish MP, President of the Land League, and later leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party Charles Stewart Parnell went on a fund-raising tour for the Land League and the relief of Irish distress in the United States in 1879 and 1880. In his speeches, Parnell associated current ills with the Great Famine and in so doing also “link[ed] Irish-American memory of the famine to the issue of land reform for Ireland,” as Ely M. Janis states.³⁶ During the Famine, nationalist, agrarian reformer, and activist James Fintan Lalor’s revolutionary approach to achieve an “independent agricultural peasantry” had been considered too radical, as the then enfeebled Irish peasantry was simply worried about survival. His, as well as nationalist John Mitchel’s, Famine-era

philosophies proved inspirational for Irish land politics over three decades later, in Lalor's case perhaps "more than they had done during his lifetime."³⁷

Several newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic also made transhistorical comparisons. In 1890, the Montreal-based Irish newspaper the *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, while reporting on new agricultural crises and political struggles in Ireland, made repeated references to the Great Famine.³⁸ Additionally, the paper printed the sermons of Irish priest and orator Tom Burke, who toured North America extensively. Burke repeatedly referred to the Famine in his inflammatory speeches to arouse nationalist sentiment among his transatlantic audience.³⁹

While in *Uncle Pat's Cabin*, Upton casts recent Irish history as a downward spiral, McDougall represents the current hardships experienced by Irish tenants as a repetition of Famine-era suffering, rather than as constituting a prolongation of the mid-1840s. As one of Ida's friends remarks, just before the smaller famine hits the Irish poor, they experienced a biblical "seven plenteous years."⁴⁰ Irish historiography supports this idea of cyclical rather than continued decline in the post-Famine era, as Ireland's overall economy experienced prosperity from the late 1850s well into the 1870s.⁴¹

The novel contains several depictions of the hardships endured by the poor Irish during the late 1870s and early 1880s. The Great Famine was the last major famine; the famine of 1879–80 was of a significantly smaller scale. Although it was marked by "severe privation," excess mortality rates were low in comparison to the Great Famine, as Cormac Ó Gráda explains.⁴² Nevertheless, the renewed threat of starvation led to panic, especially in the poorer districts.⁴³ Clearly, memories of the Great Famine significantly influenced people's responses to the new crisis. This can be considered a process of "premediation," in which representations of earlier events "shape our understanding and remembrance of later events."⁴⁴ In McDougall's perception, memories of the Great Famine premediate understandings of the 1879 famine; consequently, the latter is presented as of equal severity to the Great Famine.

As several scholars, most notably Christopher Morash, have demonstrated, while representations of famine in Ireland predate the Great Famine, famine discourse became increasingly linked to the 1845–52 disaster, which received "its own particular vocabulary."⁴⁵ *The Days of a Life* embeds its representation of the 1879 famine in this existing cultural repertoire, particularly in its repeated use of certain imagery: several

evictions, many starving tenants, and people perishing on the roadside feature, while the potato crops fail again. This repetition reaches saturation point in the chapter excerpted here and in which many of the familiar tropes of Famine representation are compressed in a few pages. McDougall's novel at this point reads as a transposed and compacted Famine narrative. This historical parallel is made explicit: the narrator informs us that at present "the great multitude struggled with death, with famine, were evicted by the thousands, sat in the shelter of the rocks and ditches, drifted into the poor-houses, and the grave. [...] It is strange how history repeats itself."⁴⁶ The novel's representation of rural Ireland contains a "realignment of temporalities":⁴⁷ different points or periods in time are brought together and late 1870s and early 1880s suffering is cast in the exact narrative mould of Famine suffering.

Selfless clergymen are also a staple element of (fictional) depictions of the Great Famine, and in *The Days of a Life*, McDougall shows great reverence for a local Catholic priest who functions as a link between the two periods of famine. After Ida and her friends witness a mass eviction, the priest reflects on the destitution and hunger among his flock:

I am not unused to scenes like this. I was in the West during the awful time of the great famine, and there I saw miles of country cleared of its inhabitants. I have seen landed proprietors helping to pull down the cabins of the poor people with their own hands. I have seen the people by hundreds on the roadside stricken with famine-fever, dying daily.⁴⁸

The priest draws a direct comparison between the narrative's present and the Great Famine past. In his experience, Irish time folds back on itself; Ireland is in the same condition as some 30 years ago. The inclusion of the priest as a connecting character presents the Famine as lived memory; it, moreover, tells the readers just how close to the heart the memory of the event was to the Irish in the late 1870s and early 1880s.

In the priest's memory, the Famine functions as a personal form of premediation for 1879. This demonstrates that premediation operates on different scales in the novel: the representation of the smaller famine is informed by a person's small-scale and precise personal memory (the priest) and a more diffuse transatlantic cultural storehouse (the repertoire of Famine tropes).⁴⁹ Moreover, the narratives of the priest and of Lord Dane Clermont were adapted from McDougall's own observations as a special correspondent, as well as from the personal stories shared with her

by her respondents, demonstrating the jagged boundary between the modes of fact and fiction writing.

Through the realignment of these different periods, their contiguities are acknowledged and strengthened. Mnemonic traces of the Famine become temporarily displaced and their connotations are projected onto another situation, creating political and moral links through an idea of analogous victimhood. For Ida and her young friends, characters who have not lived through the Famine, but who are certainly familiar with and affectively responsive to its after-effects, the memory of that period reaches them, mediated through the narratives provided by others. The ethical or moral dimension to the transmission of recollections is crucial to much scholarship in memory studies,⁵⁰ in McDougall's novel, the transmission of memory is similarly accompanied by a moral-political imperative. History is shown to "repeat itself" if land laws remain unaltered; demonstrating that memories of the destructive mid-century Famine can be used to represent current conditions, it provides the ultimate historical evidence stressing the urgency of the need for change.

CONCLUSION

McDougall's novel remains open ended: Ida goes back to Canada, we do not learn more about Butler's fate after deportation, and the new famine period is not yet over as the narrative draws to a close. Nevertheless, memories of the Great Famine do not only point out parallels of suffering in recent Irish history in *The Days of a Life*, they also have positive, transformative potential. In the novel's political-religious rhetoric, these memories are used to propose a more just future for the Irish tenantry. Indeed, the final pages provide a hopeful note as the narrator forecasts social revolution and attendant prosperity for all. Expressing faith in God and maintaining that current hardships shall also pass, the narrator predicts an end to the circularity of Irish history and concludes:

Our story ends—it is not finished.

What will the end be? Evil is not eternal! It must abolish itself, or be abolished. Through whatever pain, and throe, a new order of things shall be born, and the Evangel really means, "Peace on earth, Good Will to men."

“Erin, oh! Erin, though long in the shade,
Thy star shall shine out when the proudest shall fade.”

THE END.⁵¹

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EXCERPT: MARGARET DIXON McDougall, *THE DAYS OF A LIFE* (ALMONTE: TEMPLEMAN, 1883), 163–82

“All save the spirit of man is divine,’ to quote Byron,” said Mr. Butler. “Wild and romantic are the mountains of Donegal, sweet are her glens, and fertile her plains; but little does all that avail for her sons and her daughters.”

“Do talk sense instead of poetry, Mr. Butler,” said Dinah, shortly, “and if you mean anything tell us what you do mean.”

“I mean, Miss Livingstone, that the poetry of life, the beauty of the country, is of small avail to the people who can never get any better off through all the passing centuries. What is the beauty of Donegal to the natives, toiling on everlasting, as mere rent producers? Here is Captain Allen squeezing Sir William’s tenants, and Mr. Sinclair extorting gratuitous work out of his, over and above their rents. Some proprietors seem to consider their estates so many gold mines, out of which any amount of money can be raised. Their land is loaded down with annuities for the dowagers, fortunes for the young ladies, mortgages to pay the debts of young spendthrifts; and the peasant toils on to produce enough for all this.”

“Well, the people are lawless in many places, and even here there are outrages,” said Dinah.

“As a people they are not lawless, but submissive. Some of the common people have been carefully trained into lawlessness by their landlords. It used to be said that the King’s writ could not run in parts of Ireland; but that state of things was produced in the interest of the landlords. It was generally against some drunken squireen, or impecunious landholder, that the writs were issued. When I was in Galway, a certain Blake owned a

castle and some property there. He was one of the wasteful, prodigal descendants of the English Tribes, who seized on the patrimony of the fierce O'Flaherties of the olden time—one of those proprietors whom Lever and Lover delight to paint and label as Irish. This Blake lived in utter disregard of wrists and bailiffs. His tenants were drilled into a protective and preventative force. I remember one bailiff whom they compelled to eat his wrists, and wash them down with a large dose of sea water. It will be a terrible day for the landholders if ever their miserable tenants turn on them the lessons they have been teaching them for centuries!"

"Did the law ever get hold of this Blake?" asked Ida, on whom the picture of the revelling old heathen, with his devoted body-guard of tenants, made a different impression from what Mr. Butler intended.

"Yes, the old fox was unearthed at last; the bailiff got admittance in the guise of a beggar. The castle is roofless now, and the last of the Blakes is somewhere earning his daily bread, which is a very honorable occupation."

"Do not be mourning over the woes of Erin on this bright day. Do let us enjoy ourselves," said Ida.

They had now left verdure and bloom behind, and were threading their way through upland bogs and beneath the shadows of barren mountains. In the distance, Mr. Butler pointed out the isolated Doune Rock, standing like a sentinel, draped like a tower with green ivy, and crested with the lucky white heather.

"It was the place of inauguration of the O'Donnell princes," said Mr. Butler.

Away up on the mountain side was a little chapel, with a tall cross beside it—such a lovely mountain chapel and cross as Protestant tourists in Italy and France go into raptures about. Our picnickers had hardly time to notice that it was there, for the sunny morning had been clouding over, and the mountains had dark mists curling round their tops; but they did not take warning until a sudden mountain hailstorm broke over them with such violence as almost to take away their breath. There was not a tree to be seen in all the bleak landscape, nor a shelter of any kind but the lee side of the little chapel. To it they turned their horse's head, and made a rush for the shelter it could afford. Half laughing, and wholly out of breath, they dashed through the open gate and drew up alongside of the chapel wall, where the frozen points, driven by the mountain blast, would not have so much power to smite.

"Quite an incident in our day's pleasureing," said Ida, with a gasp, as, having got out of the croydon, the party ranged themselves against the wall.

At the corner of the chapel a head with a shock of grey hair presently appeared, looked at the party, and vanished. Immediately after an elderly priest—a tall man with fair hair and a fatherly kindness of manner—came out of the chapel and approached the party.

"You are caught in one of our mountain showers, Mr. Butler," he said. "If the ladies will walk into my house, it will at least afford more shelter than the outside of the chapel; it is just behind the chapel."

They were glad to avail themselves of the kind priest's hospitality. His house was near—in fact it was leaning its back up against the chapel, which partly screened it from sight. They were shown into a room, almost completely lined with books, that seemed to be both study and sitting room. Over the fire-place hung a framed coat-of-arms, resplendent in heraldic coloring; the rest of the furniture was plain enough. This coat-of-arms was a silent assertion that the priest claimed to be a descendant of one of the ancient families that once ruled Donegal. His appearance and manners were polished and gentlemanly; in fact he did no discredit to the ancient name of which he was so proud.

"This priest is a great lover of ancient history, and is a learned antiquarian. You would enjoy his acquaintance very much," said Mr. Butler in an undertone, to Ida.

The priest was very kind, and insisted on treating them to wine and biscuit. Ida never would even touch wine, but she was charmed with the old priest's kindness and hospitality. Never having learned to reverence a priest because he was a priest; indeed, never having come in contact with one before, and finding this one so fatherly and friendly, she felt like taking a child's advantage of him, and asking him any number of questions, in her innocently free Canadian manner. The rest felt in misery for fear she would give offence.

"You have a nice chapel here on the mountain side, father," said Ida. "Is it a new one?"

"It is not quite finished yet, but mass is said here every Sabbath," the priest answered.

"The people round here seem poor, sir. I wonder that they could build such a neat chapel." Ida said this with such sympathy in look and tone that the old priest felt it.

"This chapel," he said, kindly, "was not built by the people living on these hills. You have truly said they are too poor. It was built by the free will offerings sent back by the sons of these mountains, who are far away in America and Australia. The exiled Irish do not forget their country, and their country's needs, in the lands to which want has driven them."

"What did you do before you had this chapel?" enquired Ida.

"We held our services in the open air, as the Scotch Covenanters did. You have read about them, I suppose?" said the priest.

"Oh, yes," answered Ida, "I have read of them, and felt sorry for them. I feel sorry, too, to think that your people were too poor to have a place of worship; and I am glad to hear that their friends over the sea remembered and helped them."

Charlie and Dinah were dismayed at Ida's frank remarks, being afraid that she would commit herself by saying something to offend, and they sat ill at ease, with a secret dread of what the terribly candid Canadian mind would think of saying next. Mr. Butler, on the contrary, evidently enjoyed the situation, in a suppressed manner.

"Poverty is hard to bear, hard enough, sometimes," said the priest, gently, "but there are worse things than poverty."

"Ah, yes, sir," said the irrepressible Ida, with eagerness, "the Covenanters had worse to bear than poverty. They met at the peril of their lives, and had to set sentries to watch while they prayed. The grass of Scotland was watered with their blood."

"We, too, have suffered for the faith which is dear to us," said the priest, raising his head. "Our sufferings lasted for a longer time, and came down the years to nearer our own days than the sufferings of the Covenanters. We met among the hills, at the peril of our lives, for our worship, with sentries posted to give the alarm, for priest-hunting was a profession then. I remember, when I was a little boy, going to mass—holding my mother's hand—up to the Grianen Hill, near Derry, the place called in our language Royal Aileach. Sentries were posted to give the alarm. The officiating priest had to wade over from the island, where he had said mass earlier. He waded across waist deep in water, and stood in his dripping clothes while he said mass again; and, I suppose you know, Miss Livingstone, that a priest has to say mass fasting. This happened when I was a boy, and I am not a very old man yet."

"I am glad, sir," said Ida, heartily, "that you have lived to see these better times, and to have a chapel of your own, where you can meet without

any one to make you afraid. And I think I would like to see it," said Ida, suddenly giving utterance to the thought just as it struck her mind.

The priest rose at once. "I shall be most happy to show it to you," he said, including them all in the inviting glance which accompanied his words.

They followed him into the chapel, through a communicating door between his house and it. It was a neat, plain building, without seats, and with little ornamentation. It accommodated, the priest said, about eight hundred people. Having looked around, they passed out at the front door into the chapel yard, which was planted with young trees, mostly yews, and with the tall dark cross looming up from among them. Ida looked at the yew trees with solemn curiosity. They were a new tree to her, and through her reading, were associated with death.

"These trees are so vigorous and glassy green that I could hardly think of them as mournful yews," said Ida.

"Do you see that lonely rock over there?" asked the priest, pointing across the bare bog to where the Doune Rock stood.

"Yes," answered Ida; "Mr. Butler told us it was the place of inauguration of the O'Donnell princes."

"There is a sacred well beside it," continued the priest. "In the shelter of that rock was another place where the worshippers of a proscribed faith met, while the sentinel watched from the inauguration stone on the rock."

"I am glad that you have fallen on better times," said the sympathetic Ida. "You have a nice chapel now, and have full liberty to worship God after your own conscience."

The rain was over and they got into the croydon to depart.

"In what direction are you going?" asked the priest of Mr. Butler.

"Over to Silver Glen," said Mr. Butler. "We are going pleasureing if the weather will allow."

The priest smiled, a sad, thoughtful smile, but said nothing.

He assisted Ida into the croydon with fatherly politeness, and wished them pleasant weather, and no more hail showers to drive them to shelter. With many thanks for his politeness and kindness, they took their departure.

As they took their seats in the croydon, Charlie heard the priest's man whisper to him:

"Is it well for them to go on?"

"It is," the priest answered. "It is better to see than to hear."

They drove along in the shadow of the mountains, across tracts of boggy waste, behind the isolated Doune Rock, Mr. Butler pointing out to them the lucky white heather fringing its crest. They passed small mountain holdings, with a field or two attached, reclaimed from the bog and the stony mountain side, in which ragged laborers, with hopeless faces, were digging. It was pleasant to see how their faces brightened when Mr. Butler, whom they all seemed to know, spoke to them in their own tongue.

Dinah was turning over in her mind words that she could use in advising Ida without hurting her. "I think, Ida," she said at length, as softly as she could, "that you express yourself too freely to strangers. I was so terrified that you would offend that kind old priest by the freedom of your remarks."

"Oh, there was no danger," said Ida, lightly; "speech, if kindly spoken, draws people together; silence separates them."

"Am I to believe what that priest said?" she asked suddenly. "Was there ever a time when Protestants persecuted Catholics because of their faith?"

"It is quite true," said Mr. Butler, speaking over his shoulder, for Ida was leaning across the croydon addressing Dinah. "When men want to let out the devil that is in them, in persecution, it is easy to find an excuse," continued Mr. Butler. "Man is really an intolerant animal; the thoughts and opinions of his neighbor constitute the one realm where he cannot come and usurp rule and lordship, and it is precisely into this free realm that he is ever trying to force his way and assert his authority."

"The different governments that persecute are to blame," said Dinah.

"Governments," said Mr. Butler, "is another name for men. Governments cannot do much without the backing of the people. One party in Scotland willingly lent themselves to the persecution of the other, for their belief; one part of the Episcopalian Church of England consented to the driving out of five thousand ministers from their livings, at one time, for conscience' sake. The Puritans, who prized liberty of conscience so highly for themselves, considered all who differed from them as Amalekites, to be slain, when they had the power. When they went, self-exiled to the new world, seeking for soul-liberty for themselves, they began persecuting their fellow countrymen who differed from them, almost as soon as they set foot on the new soil, and set about exterminating the Indians with a relentless cruelty that we wonder at now. Here in Ireland Protestant persecuted Catholic, as in other countries Catholic persecuted Protestant. They all had a religious excuse for doing so; but the fact is, man always persecutes when he has the power."

"You think persecution the mistake of governments, then?" Dinah asked him.

"Governments have always found the church an auxiliary. When they take the very lowest level of expediency, the church is ready to defend and apologize on scriptural grounds."

"I never dreamed before that Protestants persecuted Catholics," said Ida.

"It is merely this, Miss Ida: Men in power persecuting those from whom they have wrested power by the strong hand, to prevent them ever becoming powerful enough to wrest it back again. When power is gained by force or fraud, the disreputable transaction is hidden under some fine name, and then it can be religiously defended. Thus the massacre of Saint Bartholomew was a political necessity; slavery, a heaven-ordained arrangement; the penal laws were the safe-guards of civil and religious liberty. The heroic defenders of Derry, the brave Enniskillen men, fought for hearth and home, civil and religious liberty. What did the dispossessed natives of the soil fight for? Was hearth and home and the faith of their fathers nothing to them?"

A silence fell over the party as they drove along. All the old distrust of Mr. Butler came up in Dinah's throat as she listened to sentiments so utterly at variance with everything she had been taught to believe. Did Mr. Butler mean to insinuate that the heroic defenders of Derry were mere freebooters, fighting for what was the inheritance of others, forcibly taken away? His talk seemed to hint that he thought so. She did chew the cud of bitter reflection as

they passed mountain and moor, lonely crag and lonelier valley.

After driving some little distance, they came out into a better country, and, turning round the shoulder of a mountain, they entered a fair valley, with rounded, grassy hills fringed with noble trees. It was a long stretch of country, in which the low hills, rising beyond one another to the far off horizon, seemed like the rolling swell of a green ocean. There were no houses in sight, but herds of handsome cattle were daintily cropping the rich sweet grass,

"Here are

'Brindle, Ebony, Speckle and Bess,
Tossing their horns in the summer wind,
Cropping the buttercups out of the grass,'"

quoted Ida. "What a great sweep of pasture land this is, and what noble cattle! Who would expect to see such a large tract of grazing land in one place in this little Ireland. This is what puzzles me, Dinah," she said, turning to her and wrinkling up her forehead. "Dr. Cameron speaks of the scarcity of land and the over population; here is a grazing farm that might have been carved out of the boundless prairie. And look at the demesne and park round Dane Clermont Castle, round Bruce Hall, and Dareaber Castle. All these are so extensive and so unproductive of anything but beauty that they seem to be parts of an unlimited quantity of *terra firma*. This looks as if land were very plentiful."

"And yet," interrupted Mr. Butler, "the weavers and laborers of happy Ulster can seldom get enough land for the traditional kail yard."

"I remember," said Charlie, "when this place round here was thickly populated. There were cottages all over. It is said, I will not say whether it is true or not, for I do not know, that the proprietor's wife kept nagging at her lord to have the population swept or, for her eyes were offended at the sight of the rustic cabins, and then cattle had become very profitable, and grazing land, therefore, very remunerative. Anyway, the landlord wiped out the inhabitants of this tract of country, and gave it up to cattle, and my lady thinks it an improvement."

"A man may do what he will with his own," said Dinah. "Remember that, Charlie. It was in his own power. It was hard, I grant, on the people, but the owner did nothing but exercise his undoubted right."

"There is where the sad part of the matter is. If every one had his own, it did not belong to the landlord or his fastidious wife. It was not they that owned the land about here, but the people," said Mr. Butler. "They were driven up into these hills when the fat lowlands and green valleys were wrested from them in confiscation times. They cleared, and drained, and reclaimed this valley by generations of patient toil. They never in their hearts believed that the rents, which drained them of all but the potatoes that constituted their living and their reproach, and the poor garments that clothed them, was due to a landlord for what of his they occupied—no, it was a tribute paid to the foreigner for the privilege of clinging to the land of their fathers."

They drove through this pleasant valley, and passed a hamlet which Mr. Butler pointed out as the birth-place of that great apostle and preacher, whose name and labors have made Icolmkill holy ground. Passing between the fair twin lakes, of which so many weird tales are told, they found themselves among the hills again.

"If we get to the gap between the Oakton rocks and Silver Lake, we might camp in a sheltered place and pick a bit of dinner. I am sure I am ready," said Charlie.

"I know a short road to the lake," said Mr. Butler, and in accordance with his directions they turned into what looked to be a little frequented road. It was difficult and stony. The soil here was poor, and could be tilled only in places; in spots, a grassy covering crept over thin shale, and in others the bare rocks pushed through the thin covering. Cabins were scattered here and there along the rocky ledge, without any attempt at order. Little fields in various stages of cultivation, were on the slope and down by the lake shore.

"What is this?" said Mr. Butler, as they gained the top of a little rising ground.

There was a large detachment of police drawn up near one of the cabins, and a squad of soldiers, also under arms, at a little distance. Laborers, armed with crowbars and pickaxes, were gathered near the houses.

"By George! we are in time for an eviction!" said Charlie, jumping out of the croydon in a hurry, and looking round in vain for some place to lie the horse. Mr. Butler fastened him to a large stone.

They all got down from the croydon with haste and went over to the scene. Some evictions had already taken place. The people were sitting among their bits of furniture, beside their levelled homes, dazed-looking and very quiet. There was no crowd of sympathetic neighbors—only about a dozen persons, who were spectators. The things which had been removed were scattered about, some broken, as if they were thrown out with violence. The cabins were unroofed and part of the walls were thrown down. The Livingstones and Mr. Butler went over to where the police were drawn up in a double line. A gentleman on horseback was overseeing the proceedings. The faces of the police were grave and stern; they hail the appearance of men doing a duty they were not delighting in. An old woman sat on a stone, her head bowed on her hands, crying and rocking herself; some children stood round also crying. A young woman with a child in her arms, tearless herself, was trying to hush the child, who was crying wildly.

The bailiff now appeared at the door of one of the cabins, forcing along an old man, who was resisting with all his feeble strength, and protesting aloud:

"Let me alone, Jimmy Farmer! Lave me in my own house. I don't owe a penny of rent. I have done no wrong to anyone. Lave the house over my head, that I built wid my own hands."

The bailiff, never heeding the cries of the old man, forced him along. He was very feeble, pale and old, but he struggled with frenzied strength, and clung to the side posts of the door, and cried hoarsely:

"Let me die under my own roof, for the love of God! I built every stone of it with my own hands. Lave me in it; I'll not trouble any man long."

The bailiff—oh! it was a sad sight to look upon!—tore his hands from the door posts and forced him outside. He became quiet as soon as he was fairly put out. He turned, knelt down and kissed the threshold he had been forced over, and murmured:

"God have mercy upon us this day, and keep us mindful that He is good."

A groan of sympathy went up from the few spectators. The old man, all the strength gone out of him, tottered to a stone and sat down, muttering to himself.

The gentleman on horseback sat as rigid and unmoved as an equestrian statue on a pedestal. He moved only when the house was unroofed and so far levelled as to afford no shelter to the houseless heads if they crept back; he then put his horse in motion and went on to the next.

There was a priest present, a short, dark man, who went among the people exhorting them to patience, to trust in God, and to submit to the law.

Ida clung to Dinah, her eyes streaming with tears, asking her, in excited tones, why these poor people were treated so; what had they done?

Mr. Butler said nothing, but stood with his arms folded, looking on, his great black eyes blazing with wrath.

One of the evicting party, not a bailiff or crowbar man, but some understrapper, came up to them and enquired their business there, which Dinah explained to prevent Charlie telling him to mind his own affairs. They did not want spectators there.

The next house in the little hamlet to which the officials moved, by Rose's description of it, was likely to be the one to which they had come in search of a servant for Bessie. It had a stone porch as a protection from the mountain winds, and a projection built at the back, which would afford inside a recess for a bed. It was altogether the most comfortable cabin still standing. There was a pause in the sounds of lamentation; a sort of breathless awe came down on the people; staring eyes and open mouths

were directed towards the low-browed doorway, into which the bailiff disappeared.

All necks were stretched to see. He came out again and went over to the person on horseback and spoke to him in a low voice.

“Do your duty,” said the gentleman, coldly.

The bailiff now spoke to one of the men who were there to pull down the houses. He laid down his crowbar and followed the bailiff into the house.

In a few minutes they came out again, bearing something like a corpse between them, wrapped in a coarse sheet. It was not a corpse, for a pale face, framed in long grey hair, lifted itself, and thin hands made a vain clutch at the doorpost and missed it. Following this sorrowful procession was the girl they had come after, Nancy Doherty, carrying a straw bed, which she laid on the ground to receive her father. The old woman was led out afterward, and then the bailiff threw out their furniture, one piece after another, with no appearance of caring where they fell.

Ida was greatly moved at this last scene, and asked again what the people had done to be treated so.

“Do they owe rent? Have they done anything?” she asked, turning to the priest, who was standing near.

The priest looked at her tear-stained face, and answered slowly, as if he weighed every word:

“As far as I know, and I am in a position to be well informed, they do not owe any rent whatever. They paid their rent about a month ago.”

“And why are they treated so inhumanly?” asked Ida.

“The landlord wishes them to leave his property; they are unwilling to go, for they have nowhere to go to. He is putting them away by force. He is certainly harsh, but he has not exceeded the power which the English law gives him, and public opinion upholds him in doing this.”

“But, sir,” said Ida, with quivering lip, “what harm have the people done?”

“They are not accused of doing any harm. The whole accusation is that they know of harm being done, and will not tell. A crime has been committed here, and Mr. Scott takes it for granted that these unhappy people know who committed it and refuse to bear witness. The people say that they do not know anything about the crime. Mr. Scott has absolutely no particle of evidence that they do, but he says he is sure of it, and so he has inflicted this dreadful punishment on the whole valley.”

"I thought," said Ida, indignantly, "that it was British law to hold men innocent until they were proved guilty?"

"It is not so in Ireland," said the priest; "here men are believed guilty when they are accused. Sometimes they may be—often they are not; the whole are condemned for the crime of a part. I am not unused to scenes like this. I was in the West during the awful time of the great famine, and there I saw miles of country cleared of its inhabitants.

I have seen landed proprietors helping to pull down the cabins of the poor people with their own hands. I have seen the people by hundreds on the roadside stricken with famine-fever, dying daily. There was no accusation against them; it was the will of the lord to rid the land of them; and all the law there was in the country was on the side of their oppressors."

"A landlord can do what he will except shoot down his tenants," said Mr. Butler. "If he did that, likely the law would interfere."

"You speak strongly," said the priest: "I do not wonder. But I must go to my people."

The day had clouded up, and rain was beginning to fall. The men hurried with their work, and they were very expert at it. The heavy rumble of falling stones, the crash of tumbling rooftrees and rafters, the rattle of furniture, sounded here and there as house after house was emptied and torn down. Sometimes a groan went up, as if heartstrings as well as rooftrees were cracking. Where the sick man lay, a little crowd was gathered, and Dinah's practical mind bethought itself of the home-made wine which her mother had put in their lunch basket, and she went to the croydon to get it. It was raining now, and some were trying to put a quilt up for a shelter over the sick man's head. Dinah stooped, and, pouring out some of the wine, held it to his lips. He did not speak in answer to her kind words, nor make any attempt to swallow. He had lain still and to all appearance insensible ever since he had been carried out. She handed the cup to his daughter, who took it from her hand, and with soothing, tender words, in her own tongue, put it to his lips; but she could not make him swallow. The grey pallor of death was on his face. Nancy, quick to notice, ran for the priest. The tumult of the falling houses sounded from the head of the glen. Mr. Butler and Charlie were up there; so was the priest, but he came at the first summons. Dinah and Ida drew back from the rude pallet where the dying man lay, under the weeping heavens, but the other homeless creatures drew near and knelt down on the wet grass, or shingly stone, while the priest administered the last rites of his church for the dying.

Ida, all her nerves in a quiver, sank on her knees also. Dinah stooped down and begged of her in a whisper to get up, or she would be taken for a Catholic.

"I don't care," said Ida; "I will kneel to my God and theirs, and pray with these poor people."

"If my sturdy Presbyterian knees did not kneel, my Irish heart cried out with hers for God to judge between this man and his tenants," said Dinah, afterwards.

Before the last echo of the falling homes died away among the rocks at the head of the glen, what had been Jamie Doherty lay stretched on the straw bed under the grey sky. The aged face looked solemn and peaceful, with the awful dignity of death imprinted on it. All trouble and care had departed, and an expression such as it had never known in life had come to it. In the glimpse which Ida had got of it, when he was carried out of his home, there was the frenzy of desperation on the thin face; now there was eternal calm. He had passed beyond the need of house or home, the care for shelter, the anxiety for tomorrow; and in the place of all this was the seal of eternal silence. He had changed from a poor old man, to be thrown out like a dog to die under the dripping heavens, into something to be spoken of with bated breath in awestruck whispers!

The women knelt bareheaded in the rain, and raised the *caoine*, or mourning for the dead. The weird sound floated up to the grey sky, and lingered and re-echoed among the rocks at the head of the glen, seeming to die away in upper air like the banshee's wail.

The last house in the valley was torn down; the rumble and crash of falling cottages was over. The evicted people were huddled in groups among their bits of furniture, until the *caoine* sounded from the mourning women, when they all gathered where the corpse lay.

The officer in command of the constabulary gave the word; the police formed to march back whence they came. As they marched past there was no face among them but wore a pitying look. The soldiers also turned about face and marched off. Mr. Scott and the squad of laborers who had torn down the houses—an ill-looking lot they were—were moving off also, under the protection of the police.

Since her father was carried dying out of his cabin, Nancy Doherty had not shed a tear or raised a lamentation; but now, as Mr. Scott rode leisurely past, she lifted a face as white as the face of the dead, and rushed over and threw herself on her knees on the stony road before him. Lifting her hands

to Heaven, she cried in a frenzied voice, made eloquent by the excess of her passion of grief and rage:

“O! living God! curse this man and his breed and seed after him, for the wickedness he has done this day. O God! see, and hear, and punish! Amen!”

Mr. Scott seemed angry enough to ride over and trample down poor Nancy, to look at his cold set face and cruel blue eyes. The priest laid his hand on Nancy and spoke to her authoritatively, and led her away.

The police resumed their march, the *caoine* seeming to pursue them down the slope, and to hang over them like a curse in the air. After the constabulary were gone, Dinah looked round for Ida, and found her dividing the contents of their well-filled basket among the children. They now had to leave them and go home—leave the dead and living under the dripping sky. There was not much outcry among the people; the great trouble had stilled them. Some old women, and nursing mothers, sat at the doors of their ruined home, moaning and rocking themselves. The rest were gathered together, as if there was comfort in being near to one another. The children cried quietly, like old people, their tears mixing with the food Ida had divided among them. The men, with set teeth and lowering brows, were trying to make some attempts at shelter for the night, which was hard to do in a country utterly devoid of trees or bushes. Ida was silent, for a great helpless anger was raised in her. Her whole soul cried out for punishment on the man who had done this cruel deed. She wondered how British law could allow this wickedness to be done. The priest was dividing his purse among the people. Ida quickly noticed this action and imitated it. Her father supplied her with a liberality that seemed excessive in the eyes of her friends; it did not seem so now. She emptied her purse into the priest's hand, that he might distribute it. They all distributed what money they had with them among the people. The priest thanked them and expressed his gratitude, and his people's gratitude, for their sympathy, and said he was glad they had seen this thing with their own eyes, lest they might think a report of it exaggerated. Ida burst into fresh tears, saying, “When it is so hard for us to look at, what must it be for those who have to suffer?”

They drove away from the sad place. They had heard of evictions before, but had never realized what it meant until they saw the dead and the aged, the little babe and its feeble mother, amid the wreck of their homes, literally embracing the rocks for shelter!

NOTES

1. The *Database of Canada's Early Women Writers* (*DoCEWW*) at Simon Fraser University gives 1828 as McDougall's birthdate (<https://dhil.lib.sfu.ca/doceww/person/2724>, (online), accessed 12 Jul. 2022, while the *Canadian Writing Research Collaboratory* (*CWRC*) gives 1826 (<https://cwrc.ca/islandora/object/ceww%3A689b2853-f4f2-4d0f-93b4-90898e0504bd>, (online), accessed 12 Jul. 2022.
2. See the preface to Margaret Dixon McDougall ["Norah"] 1883, *The Days of a Life* (Almonte: Templeman).
3. McDougall ["Norah"], *Days of a Life*, preface.
4. "Margaret Dixon McDougall (1826–1899)," *CWRC*.
5. I discuss the publication journey of McDougall's special correspondence in (2020) "From Special Correspondence to Fiction: Veracity and Verisimilitude in Margaret Dixon McDougall's Writings on Ireland," in Kathryn Laing and Sinéad Mooney (eds) *Irish Women Writers at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: Alternative Histories, New Narratives* (Brighton: Edward Everett Root), 179–92. Moreover, I am currently finalizing a monograph in which I dedicate a chapter to the analysis of her special correspondence for the *Witness*.
6. John Dougall 1845, "Prospectus," *Montreal Witness* (15 Dec.), 1.
7. In "From Special Correspondence" I reflect on the differences between McDougall's journalistic and novelistic accounts of rural agitation and the threat of famine in Ireland.
8. "Margaret Dixon McDougall (1826–1899)," *CWRC*.
9. Joe Cleary 2006, *Outrageous Fortune: Capital and Culture in Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Field Day), 35.
10. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 129.
11. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 171.
12. For Ida, "[a]ll the world seemed free and equal in her eyes; they were all fellow human beings—she respected them all—felt akin to them all." McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 17.
13. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 38.
14. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 89.
15. James Godkin 1870, *The Land-War in Ireland: A History of the Times* (London: Macmillan), 289.
16. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 289.
17. Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman 2010, "Introduction," in Matthew Cragoe and Paul Readman (eds) *The Land Question in Britain, 1750–1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 7.
18. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 288.
19. Cragoe and Readman, "Introduction," 7.

20. David Bennett King 1882, *The Irish Question* (New York: Charles Scribner's), 168.
21. Phillip Bull 2010, "Irish Land and British Politics," in Cragoe and Readman *The Land Question in Britain, 1750–1950*, 136.
22. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 318.
23. Janssen, "From Special Correspondence," 183–84. McDougall discusses the hardships caused by Lord Leitrim in several of her letters, including the letters of 4 and 14 April 1881. See also Margaret Dixon McDougall ["Norah"] 1882, *The Letters of "Norah," on her Tour through Ireland, being a Series of Letters to the Montreal "Witness" as a Special Correspondent to Ireland* (Montreal: Montreal Witness Offices), 27–29.
24. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 321, 324.
25. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 324–26.
26. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 322.
27. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 324.
28. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 417.
29. Joep Leerssen defines the "tradition of ethnotypes" as "commonplaces and stereotypes of how we identify, view and characterize others as opposed to ourselves." Joep Leerssen 2006, *National Thought in Europe: A Cultural History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press), 55–56, 17.
30. Godkin, *Land-War in Ireland*, viii.
31. "Sanquhar" 1881, "Goldsmith and Mrs. McDougall," *Daily Witness* (4 May), 4.
32. William Templeman 1883, "A Misapprehension." *Almonte Gazette* (13 Jul.), 3.
33. William C. Upton 1882, *Uncle Pat's Cabin: Or, Life among the Agricultural Labourers of Ireland* (Dublin: M. H. Gill).
34. Thomas Sherlock 1889, "The Lord of Dundonald. An Irish Story of To-Day," *The Irish-American* 41, no. 49 (30 Nov.).
35. Frank Rynne discusses the presence of the mid-century Famine in Land League rhetoric; see Frank Rynne 2015, "The Great Famine in Nationalist and Land League Propaganda, 1879–1882," *Mémoire(s), identité(s), marginalité(s) dans le monde occidental contemporain*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.4000/mimmoc.1864> (online), accessed 24 Aug. 2022.
36. Ely M. Janis 2015, *A Greater Ireland: The Land League and Transatlantic Nationalism in Gilded Age America* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press), 35.
37. John O'Beirne Ranelagh 1999, *A Short History of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 106; Philip Bull 2010, "Irish Land and British Politics," in Cragoe and Readman, *The Land Question in Britain, 1750–1950*, 126–45, 137; Donald Jordan 1998, "The Irish National League and the 'Unwritten Law': Rural Protest and Nation-Building in

Ireland 1882–1890,” *Past & Present* 158, 146–71, 149–50; Christine Kinealy 2009, *Repeal and Revolution: 1848 in Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 284.

38. For example, the *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle* of 12 November 1890 contains a letter by the Superior of the Convent of Mercy in Clifden to the Bishop of Buffalo, asking for relief for the starving and destitute parishioners. The author states that “[t]he wisest heads agree that since the great famine in 1847 there has not been such a failure of the potato crop throughout Connemara as at present.” “Letter by the Superior of the Convent of Mercy in Clifden to the Bishop of Buffalo” 1890, *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle* 41, no. 15 (12 Nov.), 4.
39. Between 1871 and 1891, Father Burke’s speeches were often reproduced on the pages of many newspapers, including the *True Witness*. In the lecture “St Laurence O’Toole, the Last Canonized Saint of Ireland,” he preaches charity by discussing a sixteenth-century saint who assisted many Irish during a contemporary famine. He then interjects the lamentation “Oh saint in Heaven! where wert thou in ‘46 and ‘47?” Thomas Burke 1872, “St Laurence O’Toole, the Last Canonized Saint of Ireland,” *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, 23, no. 10 (18 Oct.), 2.
40. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 54.
41. It should be acknowledged that Irish farmers rather than land labourers experienced this intermediate prosperity, as the latter class was too severely affected by the Famine: “For farmers with substantial landholdings, the period after the famine was mostly one of increasing prosperity, interrupted by downturns in the 1860s and 1880s. Simultaneous with the reforms of the postfamine period, the number of agricultural laborers in Ireland fell by two-thirds.” Malcolm Campbell 2008, *Ireland’s New Worlds: Immigrants, Politics, and Society in the United States and Australia, 1815–1922* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press), 132.
42. Cormac Ó Gráda 2017, “Ireland,” in Guido Alfani and Cormac Ó Gráda (eds) *Famines in European History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 182, 184.
43. Peter Gray 2010, “Irish Social Thought and the Relief of Poverty, 1847–1880,” *Transactions of the RHS*, 20, 141–56; Rynne, “Great Famine,” par. 5.
44. Astrid Erll 2009, “Remembering Across Time, Space, and Cultures: Premediation, Remediation and the ‘Indian Mutiny,’” in Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (eds) *Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory* (New York: Walter de Gruyter), 109–38, 111; Guy Beiner 2014, “Probing the Boundaries of Irish Memory: from Postmemory to Prememory and Back,” *Irish Historical Studies* 39, no. 154: 296–307.

45. Christopher Morash 1995, “Spectres of the Famine,” *Irish Review*, 17–18: 76.
46. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 418.
47. Daniel Levy 2010, “Changing Temporalities and the Internalization of Memory Cultures,” in Yifat Gutman, Adam D. Brown and Amy Sodaro (eds) *Memory and the Future: Transnational Politics, Ethics and Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan), 15.
48. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 178.
49. Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney (2014) discuss the concept of scales in transnational memory transfer in “Introduction,” in Chiara De Cesari and Ann Rigney (eds), *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter), 1–25.
50. For example, Avishai Margalit discusses the potentially ethical dimension to memory transmission in his 2002 book *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press). In *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press) Michael Rothberg (2009) advocates an egalitarian approach to comparative approaches to memory, a “multidirectional” rather than competitive approach. Lastly, Marianne Hirsch (1997) considers the effects of the trauma of previous generations on their descendants and discusses the moral obligation to remember felt by those who have inherited the trauma of the Holocaust. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).
51. McDougall, *Days of a Life*, 437–38.

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